THE SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness

To Amuse, Not to Instruct

HER HONEYMOON

REALITY

THE LAST OF THE DELCASARS

EMANCIPATION

THE GIFT OF ILLUSION

THE WILD SQUIRE

THE COME-BACK

AND MANY OTHER STORIES, POEMS, ETC.

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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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JUNE, 1920

THE GARDEN	Sara Teasdale	103
TONE POEM	Nicholas Kenyon	104
COUNTRY NOCTURNE	John McClure	104
THE LAST OF THE DELCASARS	Harvey Fergusson	105
PRAYER BEFORE VAUDEVILLE	Leonard Hall	136
THE COME-BACK	Ford Douglas	137
HILLTOP	Mena Lee	142
THE DANCING DOG	J. B. Hawley	143
I SHALL REMEMBER	Louise Foley Finerty	148
HER HONEYMOON	Solita Solano	149
NOCTURNE IN JUNE	Glenn Ward Dresbach	155
THE QUEEN FORGETS	George Sterling	156
REALITY	Helen Louise Wolcott	157
EMANCIPATION	Edith Chapman	163
FROM THE JOURNAL OF MADAME LEANDRE	Helen Woljeska	170
THE MODEL	Amanda Benjamin Hall	170
THE SMILERS	F. Scott Fitzgerald	171
THE SEARCH	Roger Blake	176
THE SPOILED SAILOR	Francis Carlin	176
THE GIFT OF ILLUSION	L. M. Hussey	177
HILLS	Harrison Dowd	186
THE WILD SQUIRE	M. E. Saltykov	187
THE POOL	John Russell McCarthy	192
OUT OF MODOC	Milnes Levick	193
IN HIS STEPS	T. F. Mitchell	197
MY HEART	Gamaliel Bradford	197
CATASTROPHE	Lew Tennant	198
MORNING SONG	Sara Teasdale	198
ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS	Mary Pitcairn	200

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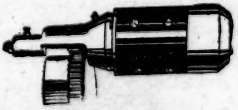

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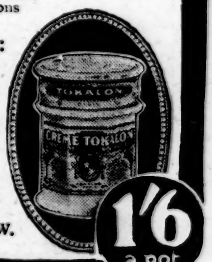

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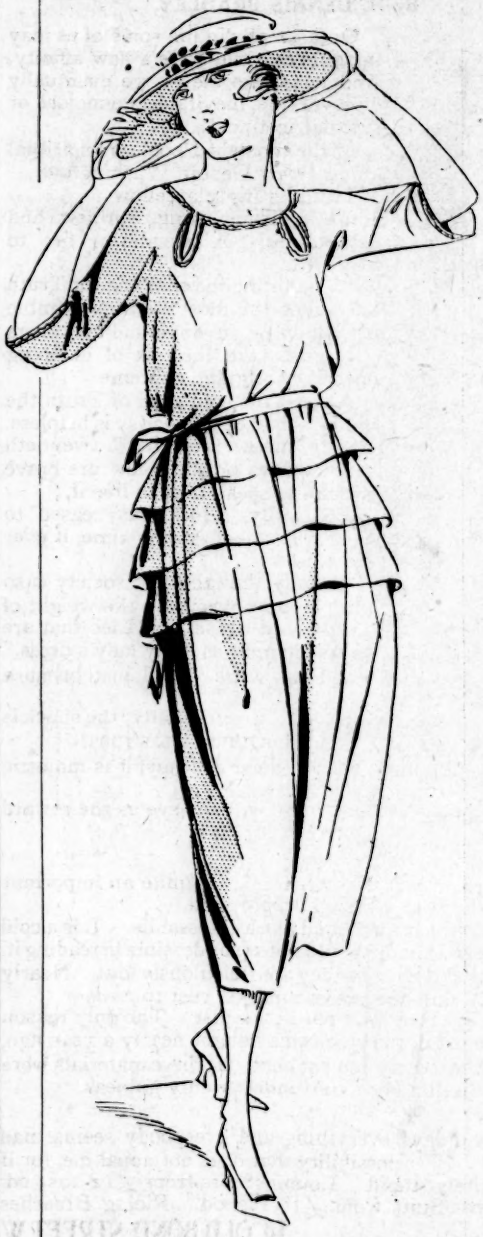

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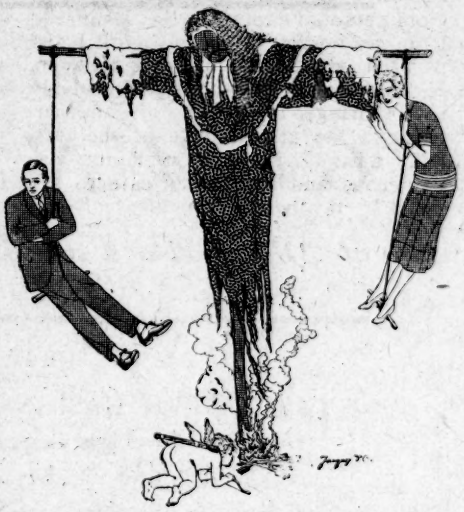

DEHUMENIZED

To meet the many requests, reproductions of some of this series of pictures, including "The Interrupted Jazz," "The Beautiful Rag," and "Victory," are now published in Colour, 17in. by 12in. at 1s. each.

Occasionally in life some of us may imagine that we have a new affinity. And if we are clever we eventually discover the inevitable homicidal or suicidal instinct.

At the moment I possess a spiritual affinity with George Washington.

Truth is my playfellow . . . . . amusing, exhilarating, ruthless and devastating. A wonderful fire to play with.

By flaunting the challenge of Truth one takes the most exciting gamble in life. For in confounding others one must take the risk of damning oneself or reigning supreme.

Against the cold steel of Truth the flimsy shield of Hypocrisy is helpless. Yet in these "cultured" twentieth century days only the few are brave enough to speak it or to live it.

Politically, Truth has ceased to exist . . . . . if, at any time, it ever did exist.

Socially the fabric of society is so thin, it can never bear the weight of Truth, so it carries the Lies that are as transparent as "my lady's dress."

I write Truth because it is the only way in which I can write. And just because Truth is unusual it appears original.

In my personal life, when I speak it, regardlessly . . . . . torrentially, the shock is electrifying, and the effects are amazing . . . . . and sometimes disastrous.

Yet, although Truth has its crudity, although it may offend delicacy, it is majestic in its strength.

And when one is completely triumphant, in Truth one will achieve as the reward . . . a splendid isolation.

* * * * * * * * * *

I had intended to write about the high cost of clothes . . . . quite an important subject now . . . . but got carried away with a thought more vital.

But I will make a statement of Truth which will sound like a colossal lie. It is a cold commercial statement, so the uncommercial minds should not squander time in reading it.

The prices charged by this House read high, but they are ridiculously low. Nearly every suit sold to-day is sold at prices below the present market cost to *produce*.

I am no longer an altruist, and do not pose as a philanthropist. The only reason the prices here are at all sane is that most of the stock was bought nearly a year ago, and, since then, materials have advanced nearly 100 per cent. If these materials were bought now it would not be possible to sell a good suit under twenty guineas.

* * * * * * * * * *

I loathe such mad prices, but now-a-days everything and everybody seems mad . . . . . including possibly myself . . . . . a possibility that does not appal me, for if I were completely sane I should be entirely stupid. Lounge Suits from £12 12s. 0d. Dinner Suits from £16 16s. 0d. Dress Suits from £18 18s. 0d. Riding Breeches from £5 15s. 6d.

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"VERNA-YEAN"

THERE are many people at present who are unfamiliar with Verna-Yean, and who will be more than pleased when they have made its acquaintance.

The following is an incident of the pleasure an acquaintance obtained:

She was a pretty girl, with lovely curly hair and a sweet expression, who lived in comfort and luxury, having everything that goes to make life worth living.

This particular evening she was expecting a few friends, needless to say some boys included, and looked forward to having a jolly time.

Well, about 7.30 the various friends were announced, and Elsie gave them a warm welcome and endeavoured to start the ball rolling gaily. The butler conducted the young men to the cloak-room in which to relieve them of their hats and coats, while Elsie took charge of her friends to do the same. Of course there was a favourite amongst them who was considered Elsie's real friend, Trixie. After the usual discussion of the latest dresses, etc., they all eventually met again in the drawing-room, where a cheerful fire roared away.

Everything went happily for over two hours, consisting of singing, dancing, recitations, etc., when Elsie was seen by her friend to pass out of the room not looking well. Naturally Trixie, offering her apologies to those she was in conversation with, went to find her. What a dejected figure she looked, sitting on the bed as though she had not slept for quite a long time.

"Whatever is the matter, my dear?" Trixie said immediately on seeing her friend so down.

"Oh, it's my nerves, I think, or because I haven't slept for several nights."

Trixie quite understood how her shaken condition was brought on—or what went a long way towards it, anyway—on account of her having been in France on heavy war work, in various grades, and having had some narrow escapes.

"Now, listen to me, dear, and I am certain I can do something for you, from personal experience, as I suffered from my nerves very badly until I discovered what I am about to tell you. It seems evident to me that everybody is suffering, one way or another, through the after effects of the war, and although the complaints are numerous and varied, it's safe to say they practically all originate from the disorder of the nerves, so the following ought to be a blessing to you and everybody. Have you ever heard of the name 'Verna-Yean'?"

"Well, I thought I heard somebody mention it, but didn't of course trouble about its meaning."

"Well, that's just the reason why you have suffered more than you need have done; now I will tell you.

"It is the name of a splendid cure for all-round nerve weakness, especially sleeplessness, and is done up in the form of pills. They are not difficult to swallow, and can be carried about with convenience."

Elsie didn't seem to appreciate Trixie's advice when she said: "It's kind of you to tell me your secret, but I'm so afraid of being drugged, and I would rather have sleepless nights than start drug-taking."

"That's just where you are mistaken, because the one great advantage is that they contain no harmful drug whatever, and therefore you run no risk of drugging yourself in order to effect a cure."

"Is that so?" Elsie's face brightened up when she said: "Then I have found a safe remedy at last. Where do I get them?"

"Just send direct to Wilkins and Wilkins (Dept. S.S.), 357, High Road, Wood Green, London, N., for a 4s. 6d. box, post free—you will have enough for three weeks' treatment."

She had got some good out of the evening after all.

"I shall not hesitate, my dear, and thank you very much."

That is one instance of a story relating to the meaning of "Verna-Yean."

Vol. LXI JUNE, 1920 No. 2

THE GARDEN

By Sara Teasdale

MY heart is a garden tired with autumn,
Heaped with bending asters and dahlias heavy and dark,
In the hazy sunshine the garden remembers April,
The drench of rains, and a snowdrop quick and clear as a spark.

Daffodils blowing in the cold wind of morning,
And golden tulips, goblets holding the rain—
The garden will be hushed with snow, forgotten soon, forgotten—
After oblivion will spring come again?

BEFORE thirty a woman's age is determined by the calendar. After thirty, by her hats.

A GRAPEFRUIT is a lemon that had a chance and took advantage of it.

TONE POEM

By Nicholas Kenyon

AS the great conductor tapped his baton the vast audience hushed its babble. The long-heralded Symphony of the Sea begins.

Preceded by a subdued roll of kettle drums, the oceanic theme is announced *fortissimo* by the strings and wood-wind. Then, the delicate foreshadowing of the storm is suggested: the interlacing of a rapid passage in semiquavers with the main *motif*. The wind is introduced by the horns in a harsh, angry countermelody. Presently the key changes to C minor . . . the storm breaks in all its violence. Every instrument blares forth with hellish fury toward a gigantic crescendo. Pandemonium. Suddenly, without warning, the sublime discord stops short, prior to the final theme. From the fourth row comes a loud feminine voice: ". . . we always fry ours in butter. . . ."

COUNTRY NOCTURNE

By John McClure

WAKEFUL beneath the crisp, clean sheet,
Fanned by the midnight breeze, I lie
And listen to the rhythmic beat
Of nature's midnight minstrelsy.

The great trees thrill with crickets; frogs
Croak from the pond with blinking eyes;
Cocks wake and bluster; lonely dogs
Bark fierce defiance at the skies;

A night-owl hoots his ghostly call—
I lie in childish fright once more.
How real the world is, after all!
I had not known before.

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CAMBRIDGE

THE LAST OF THE DELCASARS

By Harvy Fergusson

CHAPTER I

THE year that Ramon Delcasar returned to his native town in New Mexico, after four years in a Middle-western university, the annual fair was an especially gorgeous event.

A steer was roped and hog-tied in record time by Clay MacGarnigal, of Lincoln County. A seven-mile Indian relay race was won by a buck named Slonny Begay. In the broncho-busting contest one man was killed and two were injured, to the huge enjoyment of the crowd. The twenty-seventh cavalry from Fort Bliss performed a sham battle. The home team beat several other teams. Enormous apples raised by irrigation in the Pecos Valley attracted much attention, and a hungry Mexican absconded with a prize Buff Orpington rooster.

Twice a day the single narrow street which connected the neat brick and frame respectability of New Town with the picturesque *adobe* squalor of Old Town was filled by a curiously varied crowd. The tourist from the East, distinguished by his camera and his unnecessary umbrella, jostled the pueblo squaw from Isleta, with her latest-born slung over her shoulder in a fold of red blanket. Mexican families from the country marched in single file, the men first, then the women, enveloped in huge black shawls, carrying babies and leading older children by the hand. Cowboys, Indians and soldiers raced their horses through the swarming street with reckless skill. Automobiles honked and fretted. The street cars, bulging humanity at every door and window, strove in vain to relieve the situation. Several children and numerous pigs and chickens were run over. From the unpaved street to the cloudless sky rose a vast cloud of dust, such as only a rainless country made of sand can produce. Dust was in everyone's eyes and mouth and upon everyone's clothing. It was the unofficial badge of the gathering. It turned the green of the cottonwood trees to gray, and lay in wait for unsuspecting teeth between the halves of hamburger sandwiches sold at corner booths.

Ramon, who had obtained a pass to the grounds through the influence of his uncle, went to the fair every day, although he was not really pleased with it. He was assured by everyone that it was the greatest ever held in the Southwest, but to him it seemed smaller, dustier, and less exciting than the fairs he had attended in his boyhood.

This impression harmonized with a general feeling of discontent which had possessed him since his return. He had obtained a position in the office of a lawyer at fifty dollars a month, and spent the greater part of each day making out briefs and borrowing books for his employer from other lawyers. It seemed to him a petty and futile occupation, and the way to anything better was long and obscure. The town was full of other young lawyers who were doing the same things and doing them with a better grace than he. They were impelled by a great desire to make money.

He, too, would have liked a great deal of money, but he had no taste for

piling it up dollar by dollar. The only thing that cheered him was the prospect of inheriting his uncle's wealth, and that was an uncertain prospect. Don Diego seemed to be doing what he could to get rid of his wealth before he died.

Local society did not please Ramon either. The girls of the gringo families were not nearly as pretty, for the most part, as the ones he had seen in the East. The dryness and the scorching sun had a bad effect on their complexions. The girls of his own race did not much interest him; his liking was for blondes. And besides, girls were relatively scarce in the West because of the great number of men who came from the East. Competition for their favours was keen, and he could not compete successfully because he had so little money.

The fair held but one new experience for him, and that was the Montezuma ball. This took place on the evening of the last day and was an exclusive invitation event, designed to give elegance to the fair by bringing together prominent persons from all parts of the state. Ramon had never attended a Montezuma ball, as he had been considered a mere boy before his departure for college, and had not owned a dress suit. But this lack had now been supplied, and he had obtained an invitation through the governor of the state, who happened to be a Mexican.

He went to the ball with his mother and his eldest sister in a carriage which had been among the family possessions for about a quarter of a century. It had once been a fine equipage, and had been drawn by a spirited team in the days before Felipe Delcasar lost all his money, but now it had a look of decay, and the team consisted of a couple of rough-coated, low-headed brutes, one of which was noticeably smaller than the other. The coachman was a ragged native who did odd jobs about the Delcasar house.

When the Delcasar carriage reached the hotel, it had to take its place in a long line of crawling vehicles, most of which were motor cars. Ramon felt acutely humiliated to arrive at the ball in a decrepit-looking rig, when nearly everyone else came in an automobile. He hoped that no one would notice them. But the smaller of the two horses, who had spent most of his life in the country, became frightened, reared, plunged, and finally backed the rig into one of the cars, smashing a headlight, blocking traffic, and making the Delcasars a target for searchlights and oaths.

The Doña Delcasar, a ponderous and swarthy woman in voluminous black silk, became excited and stood up in the carriage, shouting shrill and useless directions to the coachman in Spanish. People began to laugh. Ramon roughly seized his mother by the arm and dragged her down. He was trembling with rage and embarrassment.

It was an immense relief to him when he had deposited the two women on chairs and was able to wander away by himself. He took up his position in a doorway and watched the opening of the ball with a cold and disapproving eye. The beginning was stiff, for many of those present were unknown to each other and had little in common. Most of them were "Americans," Jews, and Mexicans.

The affair finally got under weigh in the form of a grand march, which toured the hall a couple of times and disintegrated into waltzing couples.

Ramon watched this proceeding and several dances without feeling any desire to take part. He was in a state of grand and gloomy discontent, which was not wholly unpleasant, as is often the case with youthful glooms. He even permitted himself to smile at some of the capers cut by prominent citizens.

But presently his gaze settled upon one couple with a real sense of resentment and uneasiness. The couple consisted of his uncle, Diego Delcasar, and the wife of Gordon MacDougall, the lawyer and real-estate operator with whom the Don had formed a partner-

ship, and whom Ramon believed to be systematically fleecing the old man.

Don Diego was a big, paunchy Mexican with a smooth brown face, strikingly set off by fierce white whiskers. His partner was a tall, tight-lipped, angular woman, who danced painfully, but with determination. The two had nothing to say to each other, but both of them smiled resolutely, and the Don visibly perspired under the effort of steering his inflexible partner.

Although he did not formulate the idea, this couple was to Ramon a symbol of the disgust with which the life of his native town inspired him. Here was the Mexican sedulously currying favour with the gringo, who robbed him for his pains. And here was the specific example of that relation which promised to rob Ramon of his heritage.

For the gringoes he felt a cold hostility—a sense of antagonism and difference—but it was his senile and fatuous uncle, the type of his own defeated race, whom he despised.

For Ramon came of one of the oldest of the local Spanish families. It had been established in New Mexico in the eighteenth century by Don Eusabio Delcasar y Morales, an officer in the Spanish army, who had done good service in conquering the country from the savages and had been rewarded by the King of Spain with a great grant of land. For a century the Delcasars had been barbarian lords, rich in land and slaves and power, living picturesque lives full of battle and amour and adventurous journeyings.

Then the railroad had come to New Mexico, bringing with it a new race and a new thing called business. Ever since, the gringoes and their business methods had been taking away from the Dons their wealth in lands. Ramon's great-grandfather had been lord of a great domain, his grandfather had been a substantial land-owner, and his father had cut the family possessions down to a house in Old Town and a small sheep ranch in the Guadelupe mountains. His uncle, Diego Delcasar, was the only one of a numerous family who remained wealthy, and Diego had formed a partnership with Gordon MacDougall for the purpose of developing the former's mountain lands. It was freely predicted by those competent to judge that the leading development would be a transfer of title to Mr. MacDougall.

Ramon Delcasar, therefore, faced the gringoes almost barehanded. And he faced them with the handicap of a faint and covert but ever-present prejudice against his blood. His forbears had been called *caballeros;* he had heard himself called a "damned Mexican."

Against this prejudice he balanced the advantages of a plucky, primitive fighting spirit, of an intelligence keener than ordinary, and of an inbred pride which nothing could crush.

CHAPTER II

When the music stopped Ramon left the hall for the hotel lobby, where he soothed his sensibilities with a small brown cigarette of his own making. In one of the swinging benches covered with Navajo blankets two other dress-suited youths were seated, smoking and talking. One of them was a short, plump Jew with a round and gravely good-natured face; the other a tall, slender young fellow with a great mop of curly brown hair, large, soft eyes and a sensitive mouth.

"She's good looking, all right," the little fellow assented as Ramon came up.

"Good looking!" exclaimed the other with enthusiasm. "She's a little queen! Nothing like her ever hit this town before."

"Who's all the excitement about?" Ramon demanded, thrusting himself into the conversation with the easy familiarity which was his right as one of "the bunch."

Sidney Felberg turned to him in mock amazement.

"Good night, Ramon! Where have you been? Asleep? We're talking about Julia Roth, same as everybody else. . . ."

"Who's she?" Ramon queried coolly, discharging a cloud of smoke from the depths of his lungs. "Never heard of her."

"Well, she's our latest social sensation . . . sister of some rich lunger that recently hit town; therefore very important. But that's not the only reason. Wait till you see her."

"All right; introduce me to her," Ramon proposed.

"Go on; knock him down to the lady," Sidney proposed to his companion.

"No, you," Conny demurred. "I refuse to take the responsibility. He's too good looking."

"All right," Sidney assented. "Come on. It's the only way I can get a look at her anyway—introducing somebody else. A good looking girl in this town can start a regular stampede. We ought to import a few hundred."

It was during an intermission. They forced their way through a phalanx of men, brandishing programmes and pencils, each trying to bring himself exclusively to the attention of a small blond person who seemed to have some such quality of attractiveness for men as spilled honey has for insects.

When Ramon saw her he felt as though something inside of him had bumped up against his diaphragm, taking away his breath for a moment, agitating him strangely. And he thought he saw an answering flash of interest in her wide gray eyes.

"May I have a dance?" he inquired as their hands met.

"Let me see . . . you're awfully late." They put their heads close together over her programme. He saw her cut out the name of another man who had two dances, and then she held her pencil poised.

"Of course I didn't get your name," she admitted. "No, I'll write it. . . . Was it Carter? Delcasar? Ramon Delcasar. You must be Spanish. I was wondering . . . you're so dark. I'm awfully interested in Spanish people. . . ."

She wrote the name in a bold, upright, childish hand.

Ramon found that he had lost his mood of discontent after this, and he entered with zest into the spirit of the dance, which was fast losing its stiff and formal character. Punch and music had broken down barriers. The hall was noisy with talk and with the ringing, high-pitched laughter of excitement. It was warm and filled with an exotic, stimulating odour compounded of many perfumes.

Everyone danced. Young folk danced as though inspired, swaying their bodies in time to the tune. The old and the fat danced with pathetic joyful earnestness, going round and round the hall with red and perspiring faces, as though in this measure they might recapture youth and slimness if only they worked hard enough.

Now and then a girl sang a snatch of the tune in a clear young voice, full of abandon, and sometimes others took up the song and it rose triumphant above the music of the orchestra for a moment, only to be lost again as the singers danced apart.

Ramon had been looking forward so long and with such intense anticipation to his dance with Julia Roth that he was a little self-conscious at its beginning, but this feeling was abolished by the discovery that they could fox-trot together perfectly. He danced in silence, looking down upon her yellow head and white shoulders, the odour of her hair filling his nostrils, forgetful of everything but the sensuous delight of the moment.

This mood of solemn rapture was evidently not shared by her, for presently the yellow head was thrown back, and she smiled up at him a bit mockingly.

"Not a thing to say for yourself," she remarked. "Are you always so silent?"

Ramon grinned.

"No," he countered. "I was just

trying to get up the nerve to ask if you'll let me come to see you."

"That doesn't take much nerve," she assured him. "Practically every man I've danced with to-night has asked me that. I never had so many dates before in my life."

"Well, may I follow the crowd, then?"

"You may," she laughed. "Or call me up first, and maybe there won't be any crowd."

CHAPTER III

His mother and sister had left early, for which fact he was thankful. He walked home alone with his hat in his hand, letting the cold wind of early morning blow on his hot brow. Punch and music and dancing had filled him with a delightful excitement. He felt glad of life and full of power. He could have gone on walking for hours, enjoying the rhythm of his stride and the gorgeous confusion of his thoughts, but in a remarkably short time he had covered the mile to his house in Old Town.

It was a long, low *adobe* with a paintless and rickety wooden verandah along its front, and with deep-set, iron-barred windows looking upon the square about which Old Town was built. Delcasars had lived in this house for over a century. Once it had been the best in town. Now it was an antiquity pointed out to tourists. The Delcasars had never been able to afford a removal. They were deeply attached to the old house and also deeply ashamed of it.

Ramon passed through a narrow hallway into a courtyard and across it to his own room. The light of the oil lamp which he lit showed a large, oblong chamber with a low ceiling supported by heavy timbers, whitewashed walls and heavy, old-fashioned walnut furniture. A large coloured print of Mary and the Babe in a gilt frame hung over the wash-stand, and next to it a college pennant was tacked over a photograph of his graduating class. Several Navajo blankets covered most of the floor and a couple of guns stood in a corner.

When he was in bed his overstimulated state of mind became a torment. He rolled and tossed, beset by exciting images and ideas. Every time that a growing confusion of these indicated the approach of sleep, he was brought sharply back to full consciousness by the crowing of a rooster in the backyard. Finally he threw off the covers and sat up, cursing the rooster in two languages and resolving to eat him.

Sleep was out of the question now. Suddenly he remembered that this was Sunday morning, and that he had intended going to the mountains. To start at once would enable him to avoid an argument with his mother concerning the inevitability of damnation for those who miss early Mass.

He rose and dressed himself, putting on a cotton shirt, a faded and dirty pair of overalls and coarse leather riding boots; tied a red and white bandana about his neck and stuck on his head an old felt hat minus a band and with a drooping brim. So attired he looked exactly like a Mexican countryman—a poor *rancshero* or a woodcutter. This masquerade was not intentional, nor was he conscious of it. He simply wore for his holiday the clothes he had always worn about the sheep ranches.

Nevertheless, he felt almost as different from his usual self as he looked. A good part of his identity as a poor, discontented and somewhat lazy young lawyer was hanging in the closet with his ready-made business suit. He took a long and noisy drink from the pitcher on the wash-stand, picked up his gun and slipped cautiously out of the house, feeling care-free and happy.

Behind the house was a corral with an *adobe* wall that was all of ten feet high except where it had fallen down and been patched with boards. A scrub cow and three native horses were kept there. Two of the horses made the ill-matched team that hauled his mother and sister to church and town. The

other was a fiery, ragged little roan mare which he kept for his own use. Having deftly saddled and bridled her, he mounted and was off at a gallop.

His way led up a long, steep street lined with new houses and vacant lots; then out upon the high, empty level of the *mesa*. It was daylight now of a clear, brilliant morning.

He was riding across a level prairie, which was a gray desert most of the year, but which the rainy season of late summer had now touched with rich colours. The grass in many of the hollows was almost high enough to cut with a scythe, and its green expanse was patched with purple-flowered weeds. Meadow larks bugled from the grass; flocks of wild doves rose on whistling wings from the weedpatches; a great gray jack-rabbit with jet-tipped ears sprang from his form beside the road and went sailing away in long, effortless bounds, like a wind-blown thing. Miles ahead were the mountains—an angular mass of blue distance and purple shadow, rising steep five thousand feet above the *mesa*, with little round foothills clustering at their feet. A brisk, cool wind fanned his face and fluttered the brim of his hat.

But with the rising of the sun the wind dropped, it became warm and he felt dull and sleepy. When he came to a little juniper bush which spread its bit of shadow beside the road, he dismounted, pulled the saddle off his sweating mare, and sat down in the shade to eat a lunch he had in his pocket. When he had finished he wished for a drink of water and philosophically took a smoke instead. Then he lay down, using his saddle for a pillow, puffing luxuriously at his cigarette.

It was cool in this bit of shadow, though all the world about him swam in waves of heat. . . . Cool and very quiet. He felt drowsily content. This sunny desolation was to him neither lonely nor beautiful; it was just his own country, the soil from which he had sprung. . . . Colours and outlines blurred as his eyelids grew heavy. Sleep conquered him in a sudden black rush.

It was late afternoon when he awakened. He had meant to shoot doves, but it was too late now if he was to reach Archulera's place before dark. He saddled his mare hurriedly and went forward at a hard gallop.

Archulera's place was typical of the little Mexican ranches that dot the Southwest wherever there is water enough to irrigate a few acres. The brown block of the *adobe* house stood on an arid, rocky hillside, and looked like a part of it, save for the white door and a few bright scarlet strings of *chile* hung over the rafter-ends to dry. Down in the *arroyo* was the little fenced patch where corn and *chile* and beans were raised, and behind the house was a round goat corral of wattled brush. The skyward rocky waste of the mountain lifted behind the house, and the empty reach of the *mesa* lay before. . . . An immense and arid loneliness, now softened and beautified by many shadows.

Ramon could see old man Archulera far up the mountainside, rounding up his goats for evening milking, and he could faintly hear the bleating of the animals and the old man's shouts and imprecations. He whistled loudly through his fingers and waved his hat.

"*Como lo va primo!*" he shouted, and saw Archulera stop and look, and heard faintly his answering "*Como lo va!*"

Soon Archulera had his goats penned, and Ramon joined him while he milked half a dozen ewes.

"I'm glad you came," Archulera told him. "I haven't seen a man in a month except one gringo that said he was a prospector and stole a kid from me. . . . How was the fair?"

When the milking was over, the old man selected a fat kid, caught it by the hind leg and dragged it, bleating in wild terror, to a gallows behind the house, where he hung it up and skilfully cut its throat, leaving it to bleat

and bleed to death while he wiped his knife and went on talking volubly with his guest. The occasional visits of Ramon were the most interesting events in his life, and he always killed a kid to express his appreciation. Ramon reciprocated with gifts of tobacco and whisky. They were great friends.

Archulera was a short, muscular Mexican with a swarthy, wrinkled face, broad but well-cut. With no more disguise than a red blanket and a grunt, he could have passed for an Indian anywhere, but he made it clear to all that he regarded himself as a Spanish gentleman.

He was descended, like Ramon, from one of the old families, which had received occasional infusions of native blood. There was probably more Indian in him than in the young man, but the chief difference between the two was due to the fact that the Archuleras had lost most of their wealth a couple of generations before, so that the old man had come down in the social scale to the condition of an ordinary goat-herding *pelado*.

The old man was now skinning and butchering the goat with speed and skill. Nothing was wasted. The hide was flung over a rafter-end to dry. The head was washed and put in a pan, as were the smaller entrails with bits of fat clinging to them, and the liver and heart. The meat was too fresh to be eaten to-night, but these things would serve well enough for supper, and he called to his daughter Catalina to come and get them.

The two men soon joined her in the low, whitewashed room, which had hard mud for a floor, and was furnished with a bare table and a few chairs. It was clean, but having only one window, and that always closed, it had a pronounced and individual odour.

In one corner was a little fireplace, which had long served both for cooking and to furnish heat, but as a concession to modern ideas Archulera had lately supplemented it with a cheap range in the opposite corner. There Catalina was noisily distilling an aroma from goat liver and onions. These viands were supplemented by a pan of large pale biscuits and a big tin pot of coffee.

Catalina served the two men, saying nothing, not even raising her eyes, while they talked and paid no attention to her. After eating her own supper and washing the dishes, she disappeared into the next room. This self-effacing behaviour on the part of the girl accorded with the highest standards of Mexican etiquette, and showed her good breeding.

After the meal Archulera became reminiscent of his youth. Some thirty-five years before he had been one of the young bloods of the country and had fought against the Navajos and Apaches. He had made a reputation, long since forgotten by everyone but himself, for ruthless courage and straight shooting, and many a man had he killed.

In his early life, as he had often told Ramon, he had been a boon companion of old Diego Delcasar. The two had been associated in some mining venture, and Archulera claimed that Delcasar had cheated him out of his share of the proceeds, and so doomed him to his present life of poverty.

When properly stimulated by food and drink Archulera never failed to tell this story, and to express his hatred for the man who had deprived him of wealth and social position. He had at first approached the subject diffidently, not knowing how Ramon would regard an attack on the good name of his uncle, and being anxious not to offend the young man. But finding that Ramon listened tolerantly, if not sympathetically, he had told the story over and over, each time with more detail and more abundant and picturesque denunuciation of Diego Delcasar, but with substantial uniformity as to the facts.

As he spoke he watched the face of Ramon narrowly. Always the recital ended about the same way.

"You are not like your uncle," he assured the young man earnestly, in

his formal Spanish. "You are generous, honourable. When your uncle is dead, you will repay me for the wrongs which I have suffered—no?"

Ramon would always laugh at this. This night, in order to humour the old man, he asked him how much he thought the Delcasar estate owed him for his ancient wrong.

"Five thousand dollars!" Archulera replied with slow emphasis.

He probably had no idea how much he had lost, but five thousand dollars was his conception of a great deal of money.

Ramon again laughed and refused to commit himself. He certainly had no idea of giving Archulera five thousand dollars, but he thought that if he ever did come into his own he would certainly take care of the old man.

Soon after this Archulera went off to sleep in the other end of the house, after trying in vain to persuade Ramon to occupy his bed. Ramon, as always, refused. He would sleep on a pile of sheep skins in the corner. He really preferred this, because the sheep skins were both cleaner and softer than Archulera's bed.

After the old man had gone, he stretched out on his pallet, and lit another cigarette. He could hear his host thumping around for a few minutes; then it was very still, save for a faint moan of wind and the ticking of a cheap clock. This late, still hour had always been to him one of the most delightful parts of his visits to Archulera's house. For some reason he got a sense of peace and freedom out of this far-away quiet place.

He was the product of a transition, and two beings warred in him. In town he was dominated by the desire to be like the Americans, and to gain a foothold in their life of law, greed, and respectability; in the mountains he relapsed unconsciously into the easy, barbarous ways of his fathers. Incidentally, this periodical change of personality was refreshing and a source of strength.

CHAPTER IV

At ten o'clock in the morning Ramon was hard at work in the office of James B. Green. He worked efficiently and with zest, as he always did after one of his trips to the mountains. He got out of these ventures into another environment about what some men get out of sprees—a complete change of the state of mind. Archulera and his daughter were now completely forgotten, and all of his usual worries and plans were creeping back into his consciousness.

But this day he had a feeling of pleasant anticipation. At first he could not account for it. And then he remembered the girl—the one he had met at the Montezuma ball. It seemed as though the thought of her had been in the back of his mind all the time, and now suddenly came forward, claiming all his attention, stirring him to a quick unwonted excitement. She had said he might come to see her. He was to 'phone first. Maybe she would be alone. . . .

She gave him the appointment, and she herself admitted him. He thought he had never seen such a dainty bit of fragrant perfection, all in pink that matched the pink of her strange little crinkled mouth.

"I'm awfully glad you came," she told him. (Her gladness was always awful.) She led him into the sitting-room and presented him to a tall, emaciated sick man and a large, placid woman, who were her brother and her mother.

Gordon Roth greeted him with a cool and formal manner into which he evidently tried to infuse something of cordiality, as though a desire to be just and broad-minded struggled with prejudice. Mrs. Roth looked at him with curiosity, and gave him a still more restrained greeting.

The conversation was a weak and painful affair, kept barely alive, now by one and now by another. The atmosphere was heavy with disapproval.

If their greetings had left Ramon in any doubt as to the attitude of the girl's family toward him, that doubt was removed by the fact that neither Mrs. Roth nor her son showed any intention of leaving the room. This would have been not unusual if he had called on a Mexican girl, especially if she belonged to one of the more old-fashioned families, but he knew that American girls are left alone with their suitors if the suitor is at all welcome.

He knew a little about this family from hearsay. They came from one of the larger factory towns in northern New York, and were supposed to be moderately wealthy. They used a very broad "a" and served tea at four o'clock in the afternoon. Gordon Roth was a Harvard graduate and did not conceal the fact. Neither did he conceal his hatred for this sandy little western town, where ill-health had doomed him to spend many of his days and perhaps to end them.

The girl was strangely different from her mother and brother. Whereas their expressions were stiff and solemn, her eyes showed an irrepressible gleam of humour, and her fascinating little mouth was mobile with mirth. She fidgeted around in her chair a good deal, as a child does when bored.

Mrs. Roth decorously turned the conversation toward the safe and reliable subjects of literature and art.

"What do you think of Maeterlinck, Mr. Delcasar?" she enquired in an innocent manner that must have concealed malice.

"I don't know him," Ramon admitted. "Who is he?"

Mrs. Roth permitted herself to smile. Gordon Roth came graciously to the rescue.

"Maeterlinck is a great Belgian writer," he explained. "We are all very much interested in him. . . ."

Julia gave a little flounce in her chair, and crossed her legs with a defiant look at her mother.

"I'm not interested in him," she announced with decision. "I think he's a bore. Listen, Mr. Delcasar. You know Conny Masters? Well, he was telling me the most thrilling tale the other day. He said that the country Mexicans have a sort of secret religious fraternity that most of the men belong to, and that they meet every Good Friday and beat themselves with whips and sit down on cactus and crucify a man on a cross and all sorts of horrible things . . . for penance, you know, just like the monks and things in the Middle Ages. He claims he saw them once and that they had blood running down to their heels. Is all that true? I've forgotten what he called them. . . ."

Ramon nodded.

"Sure. The *penitentes*. I've seen them lots of times. . . ."

He proceeded to describe in the bald but vivid way of a man who has imagination but is not conscious of it, a procession of the penitent brothers which he had once witnessed near his father's ranch in the Guadelupe mountains. He made them see the long line of half-naked, blindfolded men marching in the raw wind with torn backs and blood dripping from their heels. He described this brutal survival of the Middle Ages simply and casually because it had always been a commonplace thing to him.

Two things he achieved by his recital. He gave his hearers a convincing impression of the primitive background of his own life, and for the first time he caught their interest. Julia listened with wide eyes and parted lips, as a child listens to the story of Jack the Giant Killer. But Mrs. Roth and her son listened with the ill-concealed horror and aversion which persons of relatively narrow sympathies always feel for anything foreign to their own experience and aspiration.

"And you mean to tell me that at one time nearly all the—er—native people belonged to this organization, and that many of them do yet?" Gordon Roth demanded.

"Nearly all the common *pelados*," Ramon hastened to explain. "Most of them are Indian or part Indian, you know. . . . Not the educated people."

Here a note of pride came into his voice. "We are descended from officers of the Spanish army—the men who conquered this country. In the old days, before the American came, all these common people were our slaves."

"I see," said Gordon Roth in a dry and judicial tone.

The *penitentes*, as a subject of conversation, seemed exhausted for the time being, and Ramon had given up all hope of being alone with Julia.

He rose and took his leave. To his delight, Julia followed him to the door. In the hall she gave him her hand and looked up at him, and neither of them found anything to say.

For some reason the pressure of her hand and the look of her eyes flustered and confused him more than had all the coldness and disapproval of her family. At last he said good-bye and got away, with his hat on wrong side before and the blood pounding in his temples.

CHAPTER V

DURING the following weeks Ramon worked even less than was his custom. He also neglected his trips to the mountains and most of his other amusements. These seemed to have lost their interest for him. But he was a regular attendant upon the weekly dances which were held at the Country Club, and to which he had never gone before.

The Country Club was a recent acquisition of the town, backed by a number of local business men, and designed primarily to make the place more acceptable to the wealthy Eastern health-seeker. It consisted of a picturesque little frame lodge far out upon the *mesa*, and a nine-hole golf course, made of sand and haunted by lizards and rattlesnakes. It had become a centre of local society, although there was a much more exclusive organization known as the Forty Club, which gave a very formal ball once a month.

Ramon had never been invited to join the Forty Club, but the political importance of his family had procured him a membership in the Country Club and it served his present purpose very well, for he found Julia Roth there every Saturday night. This fact was the sole reason for his going. His dances with her were now the one thing in life to which he looked forward with pleasure, and his highest hope was that he might be alone with her.

In this he was disappointed for a long time because Julia was the belle of the town. Her dainty, provocative presence seemed always to be the centre of the gathering. Women envied her and studied her frocks, which were easily the most stylish in town. Men flocked about her and guffawed at her elfin stabs of humour. Her programme was always crowded with names, and when she went for a stroll between dances she was generally accompanied by at least three men, of whom Ramon was often one. And while the others made her laugh at their jokes or thrilled her with accounts of their adventures, he was always silent and worried—an utter bore, he thought.

This girl was a new experience to him. With the egotism of twenty-four, he had regarded himself as a finished man of the world, especially with regard to women. They had always liked him. He was good to look at and his silent, self-possessed manner touched the feminine imagination. He had had his share of the amorous adventures that come to most men, and his attitude toward women had changed from the hesitancy of adolescence to the purposeful, confident and somewhat selfish attitude of the male accustomed to easy conquest.

This girl, by a smile and touch of her hand, seemed to have changed him. She filled him with a mighty yearning. He desired her, and yet there was a puzzling element in his feeling that seemed to transcend desire. And he was utterly without his usual confidence and purpose. He had reason enough to doubt his success, but aside from that she loomed in his imagination as something essentially high and unattainable. He had no plan. His

strength seemed to have oozed out of him. He pursued her persistently enough—in fact, too persistently—but he did it because he could not help it.

The longer he followed in her wake, the more marked his weakness became. When he approached her to claim a dance he was often aware of a faint tremble in his knees, and was embarrassed by the fact that the palms of his hands were moist. He felt that he was a fool and swore at himself. And he was wholly unable to believe that he was making any impression upon her.

True, she was quite willing to flirt with him. She looked up at him with an arch, almost enquiring glance when he came to claim her for a dance, but he seldom found much to say at such times, being too wholly absorbed in the sacred occupation of dancing with her. And it seemed to him that she flirted with everyone else, too. This did not in the least mitigate his devotion, but it made him acutely uncomfortable to watch her dance with other men, and especially with Conny Masters.

Masters was the son of a man who had made a moderate fortune in the tin-plate business. He had come West with his mother, who had a weak throat, had fallen in love with the country, and scandalized his family by resolutely refusing to go back to India and tin cans. He spent most of his time riding about the country, equipped with a notebook and a camera, studying the Mexicans and Indians, and taking pictures of the scenery. He said that he was going to make a literary career, but the net product of his effort for two years had been a few sonnets of lofty tone but vague meaning, and a great many photographs, mostly of sunsets.

Conny was not a definite success as a writer, but he was unquestionably a gifted talker, and he knew the country better than did most of the natives. He made real to Julia the romance which she craved to find in the West. And her watchful and suspicious family seemed to tolerate if not to welcome him. Ramon knew that he went to the Roths' regularly. He began to feel something like hatred for Conny, whom he had formerly liked.

This feeling was deepened by the fact that Conny seemed to be specifically bent on defeating Ramon's ambition to be alone with the girl. If no one else joined them at the end of a dance, Conny was almost sure to do so, and to occupy the intermission with one of his ever-ready monologues, while Ramon sat silent and angry, wondering what Julia saw to admire in this windy fool, and occasionally daring to wonder whether she really saw anything in him after all.

But a sufficiently devoted lover is seldom wholly without reward. There came an evening when Ramon found himself alone with her. And he was aware with a thrill that she had evaded not only Conny, but two other men. Her smile was friendly and encouraging, too, and yet he could not find anything to say which in the least expressed his feelings.

"Are you going to stay in this country long?" he began.

The question sounded supremely casual, but it meant a good deal to him. He was haunted by a fear that she would depart suddenly, and he would never see her again.

She smiled and looked away for a moment before replying, as though perhaps this was not exactly what she had expected him to say.

"I don't know. Gordon wants mother and me to go back East this fall, but I don't want to go and mother doesn't want to leave Gordon alone. . . . We haven't decided. Maybe I won't go until next year."

"I suppose you'll go to college, won't you?"

"No; I wanted to go to Vassar and then study art, but mother says college spoils a girl for society. She thinks the way the Vassar girls walk is perfectly dreadful. I offered to go right on walking the same way, but she said anyway college makes girls so frightfully broad-minded. . . ."

Ramon laughed.

"What will you do then?"

"I'll come out."

"Out of what?"

"Make my début, don't you know?"

"Oh, yes."

"In New York. I have an aunt there. She knows all the best people there, mother says."

"What happens after you come out?"

"You get married if anybody will have you. If not, you sort of fade away and finally go into uplift work about your fourth season."

"But, of course, you'll get married. I bet you'll marry a millionaire."

"I don't know. Mother wants me to marry a broker. She says the big financial houses in New York are conducted by the very best people. But Gordon thinks I ought to marry a professional man—a doctor or something. He thinks brokers are vulgar. He says money isn't everything."

"What do you think?"

"I haven't a thought to my name. All my thinking has been done for me since infancy. I don't know what I want, but I'm pretty sure I wouldn't get it if I did. . . . Come on. They've been dancing for ten minutes. If we stay here any longer it'll be a scandal."

She rose and started for the hall. He suddenly realized that his long-sought opportunity was slipping away from him. He caught her by the hand.

"Don't go, please. I want to tell you something."

She met his hand with a fair grip, and pulled him after her with a laugh.

"Some other time," she promised.

CHAPTER VI

In most of their social diversions the town folk tended always more and more to ape the ways of the East. Local colour, they thought, was all right in its place, which was a curio store or a museum, but they desired their town to be modern and citified, so that the wealthy eastern health-seekers would find it a congenial home. The scenery and the historic past were recognized as assets, but they should be the background for a life of "culture, refinement and modern convenience" as the president of the Chamber of Commerce was fond of saying.

Hence the riding parties and picnics of a few years before had given way to aggressively formal balls and receptions; but one form of entertainment that was indigenous had survived. This was known as a "*mesa* supper." It might take place anywhere in the surrounding wilderness of mountains and desert. Several auto-loads of young folks would motor out, suitably chaperoned and laden with provisions. Beside some water hole or mountain stream, fires would be built, steaks broiled and coffee brewed. Afterward there would be singing and story-telling about the fire, and romantic strolls by couples.

It was one of these expeditions that furnished Ramon with his second opportunity in three weeks to be alone with Julia Roth. The party had journeyed to *Los Ojuellos*, where a spring of clear water bubbled up in the centre of the *mesa*. A grove of cottonwood trees shadowed the place, and there was an ancient *adobe* ruin which looked especially effective by moonlight.

The persistent Conny Masters was a member of the party, but he was handicapped by the fact that he knew more about camp cookery than anyone else present. He had made a special study of Mexican dishes and had written an article about them which had been rejected by no less than twenty-seven magazines. He made a speciality of the *enchilada*, which is a delightful concoction of corn meal, eggs and chile, and he had perfected a recipe of his own for this dish which he had named the Conny Masters junior.

As soon as the baskets were unpacked and the chaperones were safely anchored on rugs and blankets with their backs against trees, there was a general demand, strongly backed by

Ramon, that Conny should cook supper. He was soon absorbed in the process, volubly explaining every step, while the others gathered about him and offered encouragement and humorous suggestion. But there was soon a gradual dispersion of the group, some going for wood and some for water, and others on errands unstated.

Ramon found himself strolling under the cottonwoods with Julia. Neither of them had said anything. It was almost as though the tryst had been agreed upon before. She picked her way slowly among the tussocks of dried grass, her skirt daintily kilted. A faint but potent perfume from her hair and dress blew over him. He ventured to support her elbow with a reverent touch. Never had she seemed more desirable, nor yet, for some reason, more remote.

Suddenly she stopped and looked up at the great desert stars.

"Isn't it big and beautiful?" she demanded. "And doesn't it make you feel free? It's never like this at home, somehow."

"What is it like where you live?" he enquired. He had a persistent desire to see into her life and understand it, but everything she told him only made her more than ever to him a being of mysterious origin and destiny.

"It's a funny little New York factory city with very staid ways," she said. "You go to a dance at the country club every Saturday night and to tea parties and things in between. You fight, bleed and die for your social position and once in a while you stop and wonder why. . . . It's a bore. You can see yourself going on doing the same thing till the day of your death. . . ."

Her discontent with things as they are found ready sympathy.

"That's just the way it is here," he said with conviction. "You can't see anything ahead."

"Oh, I don't think it's the same here at all," she protested. "This country's so big and interesting. It's different."

"Tell me how," he demanded. "I haven't seen anything interesting here since I got back—except you."

She ignored the exception.

"I can't express it exactly. The people here are just like people everywhere else—most of them. But the country looks so big and unoccupied. And blue mountains are so alluring. There might be anything beyond them . . . adventures, opportunities . . ."

This idea was a bit too rarefied for Ramon, but he could agree about the mountains.

"It's a fine country," he assented. "For those that own it."

"It's just a feeling I have about it," she went on, trying to express her own half-formulated idea. "But then I have that feeling about life in general, and there doesn't seem to be anything in it. I mean the feeling that it's full of thrilling things, but somehow you miss them all."

He glanced at her with quick admiration.

"I have felt something like that," he admitted. "But I never could say it."

This discovery of an idea in common seemed somehow to bring them much closer together.

His hand tightened gently about her arm; almost unconsciously he drew her toward him.

But she seemed to be all absorbed in the discussion.

"You have no right to complain," she told him. "A man can do something about it."

"Yes," he agreed, speaking a reflection without stopping to put it in conventional language. "It must be hell to be a woman . . . excuse me . . . I mean . . ."

"Don't apologize. It is . . . just that. A man at least has a fighting chance to escape boredom. But they won't even let a woman fight. I wish I were a man!"

"Well; I don't," he asserted with warmth, unconsciously tightening his hold upon her arm. "I can't tell you how glad I am that you're a woman!"

"Oh, are you?" She looked up at him with challenging, provocative eyes.

For an instant a kiss was imminent. It hovered between them like an invisible fairy presence of which they both were sweetly aware, and no one else.

"Hey there! all you spooners!" came a jovial and irreverent voice from the vicinity of the campfire. "Come and eat!"

The moment was lost; the fairy presence gone. She turned with a little laugh, and they went in silence back to the fire. They were last to enter the circle of ruddy light, and all eyes were upon them. She was pink and self-conscious, looking at her feet and picking her way with exaggerated care. He was proud and elated.

This, he knew, would couple their names in gossip, would make her partly his.

CHAPTER VII

He wanted to call on her again, but he felt that he had been insulted and rejected by the Roths, and his pride fought against it. Unable to think for long of anything but Julia he fell into the habit of walking by her house at night, looking at its lighted windows and wondering what she was doing.

Often he could see the moving figures and hear the laughter of some gay group about her, but he could not bring himself to go in and face the chilly disapproval of her family. At such times he felt an utter outcast, and sounded depths of misery he had never known before. For this was his first real love, and he loved in the helpless, desperate way of the Latin, without calculation or humour.

One evening there was a gathering on the porch of the Roth house. She was there, sitting on the steps with three men about her. He could see the white blur of her frock and hear her funny little bubbling laugh above the deeper voices of the men. Having ascertained that neither Gordon Roth nor his mother was there, he summoned his courage and went in. She could not see who he was until he stood almost over her.

"Oh, it's you! I'm awfully glad." Their hands met and clung for a moment in the darkness. He sat down on the steps at her feet, and the conversation moved on without any assistance from him. He was now just as happy as he had been miserable a few minutes before.

Presently two of the other men went away, but the third, who was Conny Masters, stayed. He talked volubly as ever, telling wonderful, and sometimes incredible, stories of things he had seen and done in his wanderings.

Ramon said nothing. Julia responded less and less. Once she moved to drop the wrap about her shoulders, and the alert Conny hastened to assist her.

Ramon watched and envied with a thumping heart as he saw the gleam of her bare white shoulders, and realized that his rival might have touched them.

Conny went on talking for half an hour with astonishing endurance and resourcefulness, but it became always more apparent that he was not captivating his audience. He had to laugh at his own humour and expatiate on his own thrills. Finally a silence fell upon the three, broken only by occasional commonplace remarks.

"Well, I guess it's time to drift," Conny remarked at last, looking cautiously at his watch.

This suggestion was neither seconded by Ramon nor opposed by Julia. The silence literally pushed Conny to his feet.

"Going, Ramon? No? Well, goodnight." And he retired, whistling in a way which showed his irritation more plainly than if he had sworn.

The two impolite ones sat silent for a long moment. Ramon was trying to think of what he wanted to say and how he wanted to say it. Finally without looking at her he said in a low, husky voice.

"You know . . . I love you."

There was more silence.

At last he looked up and met her eyes. They were serious for the first time in his experience, and so was her usually mocking little mouth. Her face was transformed and dignified. More than ever she seemed a strange, high being. And yet he knew that now she was within his reach. . . . That he could kiss her lips . . . incredible. . . . And yet he did, and the kiss poured flame over them and welded them into each other's arms.

They heard Gordon Roth in the house coughing, the cough coming closer.

She pushed him gently away.

"Go now," she whispered. "I love you . . . Ramon."

CHAPTER VIII

His conquest was far from giving him peace. Her kiss had transformed his high, vague yearning into hot, relentless desire. He wanted her. That became the one clear thing in life to him. Reflections and doubts were alien to his young and primitive spirit. He did not try to look far into the future. He only knew that to have her would be delight almost unimaginable and to lose her would be to lose everything.

His atttitude toward her changed. He claimed her more and more at dances. She did not want to dance with him so much because "people would talk," but his will was stronger than hers and to a great extent he had his way. He now called on her regularly, too. He knew that she had fought hard for him against her family, and had won the privilege for him of calling "not too often."

"I've lied for you frightfully," she confessed. "I told them I didn't really care for you in the least, but I want to see you because you can tell such wonderful things about the country. So talk about the country whenever they're listening . . . and don't look at me the way you do. . . ."

Mother and brother were alert and suspicious despite her assurance, and manœuvred with cool skill to keep the pair from being alone. Only rarely did he get the chance to kiss her . . . once when her brother, who was standing guard over the family treasure, was seized with a fit of coughing and had to leave the room, and again when her mother was called to the telephone. At such times she shrank away from him at first as though frightened by the intensity of the emotion she had created, but she never resisted. To him these brief and stolen embraces were almost intolerably sweet, like insufficient sips of water to a man burned up with thirst.

She puzzled him as much as ever. When he was with her he felt as sure of her love as of his own existence. And yet she often sought to elude him. When he called up for engagements she objected and put him off. And she surrounded herself with other men as much as ever, and flirted gracefully with all of them, so that he was always feeling the sharp physical pangs of jealousy. Sometimes he felt egotistically sure that she was merely trying by these devices to provoke his desire the more, but at other times he thought her voice over the phone sounded doubtful and afraid, and he became wildly eager to get to her and make sure of her again.

Just as her kiss had crystallized his feeling for her into driving desire, so it had focused and intensified his discontent. Before, he had been more or less resigned to wait for his fortune and the power he meant to make of it; now it seemed to him that unless he could achieve these things at once, they would never mean anything to him. For money was the one thing that would give him even a chance to win her. It was obviously useless to ask her to marry him poor. He would have nothing to bring against the certain opposition of her family. He could not run away with her. And indeed he was altogether too poor to support a wife if he had one, least of all a wife who had been carefully groomed and trained to capture a fortune.

There was only one way. If he could go to her strong and rich, he felt sure that he could persuade her to run away with him, for he knew that she belonged to him when he was with her.

He pictured himself going to her in a great motor car. Such a car had always been in his imagination the symbol of material strength. He felt sure he could destroy her doubts and hesitations. He would carry her away and she would be all and irrevocably his before anyone could interfere or object.

This dream filled and tortured his imagination. Its realization would mean not only fulfilment of his desire, but also revenge upon the Roths for the humiliations they had made him feel. It pushed everything else out of his mind—all consideration of other and possibly more feasible methods of pushing his suit. He came of a race of men who had dared and dominated, who had loved and fought, but had never learned how to work or to endure.

When he gave himself up to his dream he was almost elated, but when he came to contemplate his actual circumstances, he fell into depths of discouragement and melancholy. His uncle stood like a rock between him and his desire. He thought of trying to borrow a few thousand dollars from old Diego, and of leaving the future to luck, but he was too intelligent long to entertain such a scheme. The Don would likely have provided him with the money, and he would have done it by hypothecating more of the Delcasar lands to MacDougall. Then Ramon would have had to borrow more, and so on, until the lands upon which all his hopes and dreams were based had passed for ever out of his reach..

The thing seemed hopeless, for Don Diego might well live for many years. And yet Ramon did not give up hope. He was worried, desperate and bitter, but not beaten. He had still that illogical faith in his own destiny which is the gift that makes men of action.

At this time he heard particularly disquieting things about his uncle. Don Diego was reputed to be spending unusually large sums of money. As he generally had not much ready cash, this must mean either that he had sold land or that he had borrowed from MacDougall, in which case the land had doubtless been given as security. Once it was converted into cash in the hands of Diego, Ramon knew that his prospective fortune would swiftly vanish. He determined to watch the old man closely.

He learned that Don Diego was playing poker every night in the back room of the White Camel pool hall. Gambling was supposed to be prohibited in the town, but this sanctum was regularly the scene for a game, which had the reputation of causing more money to change hands than any other in the Southwest.

Ramon hung about the White Camel evening after evening, trying to learn how much his uncle was losing. He would have liked to go and stand behind his chair and watch the game, but both etiquette and pride prevented him doing this.

On two nights his uncle came out surrounded by a laughing crowd, a little bit tipsy, and was hurried into a cab. Ramon had no chance to speak either to him or to anyone who had been in the game. But the third night he came out alone, heavy with liquor, talking to himself.

The other players had already gone out, laughing. The place was nearly deserted.

The Don suddenly caught sight of Ramon and came to him, laying heavy hands on his shoulders, looking at him with bleary, tear-filled eyes.

"My boy, my nephew!" he exclaimed in Spanish, his voice shaking with boozy emotion, "I am glad you are here. Come, I must talk to you."

And steadied by Ramon he led the way to a bench in a corner.

Here his manner suddenly changed. He threw back his head haughtily and slapped his knee.

"I have lost five hundred dollars to-

night," he announced proudly. "What do I care? I am a rich man. I have lost a thousand dollars in the last three nights. That is nothing. I am rich!" He thumped his chest, looking around defiantly.

Then he leaned forward in a confidential manner and lowered his voice.

"But these gringoes—they have gone away and left me. You saw them? *Cabrones!* They have got my money. That is all they want. My boy, all gringoes are alike. They want nothing but money. They can hear the rattle of a *peso* as far as a *burro* can smell a bear. They are mean, stingy! Ah, my boy! It is not now as it was in the old days. Then money counted for nothing! Then a man could throw away his last dollar and there were always friends to give him more. But now your dollars are your only true friends, and when you have lost them, you are alone indeed. Ah, my boy! The old days were the best!" The old Don bent his head over his hands and wept.

Ramon looked at him with a mighty disgust and with a resentment that filled his throat and made his head hot.

He had never before realized how much broken by age and drink his uncle was. Before, he had suspected and feared that Don Diego was wasting his property; now he knew it.

The Don presently looked up again with tear-filled eyes, and went on talking, holding Ramon by the lapel of the coat in a heavy, tremendous grip.

He talked for almost an hour, his senile mind wandering aimlessly through the scenes of his long and picaresque career. He would tell tales of his loves and battles of fifty years ago—tales full of lust and greed and excitement. He would come back to his immediate troubles and curse the gringoes again for a pack of miserable dollar-mongers, who knew not the meaning of friendship. And again his mind would leap back irrelevantly to some woman he had loved or some man he had killed in the spacious days where his imagination dwelt.

Ramon listened eagerly, hoping to learn something definite about the Don's dealings with MacDougall, but the old man never touched upon this. He did tell one story to which Ramon listened with interest. He told how, twenty-five years before, he and another man named Cristobal Archulera had found a silver mine in the Guadalupe mountains, and how he had cheated the other out of his interest by filing the claim in his own name. He told this as a capital joke, laughing and thumping his knee.

"Do you know where Archulera is now?" Ramon ventured to ask.

"Archulera? No, no; I have not seen Archulera for twenty years. I heard that he married a very common woman, half Indian . . . I don't know what became of him."

The last of the pool players had now gone out; a Mexican boy had begun to sweep the floor; the place was about to close for the night.

Ramon got his uncle to his feet with some difficulty, and led him outdoors where he looked about in vain for one of the cheap autos that served the town as taxicabs. There were only three or four of them, and none of these were in sight. The flat-wheeled street car had made its last screeching trip for the night. There was nothing for it but to take the Don by the arm and pilot him slowly homeward.

Refreshed by the night air, the old man partially sobered up, walked with a steady step, and talked more eloquently and profusely than ever.

Women were his subject now, and it was a subject upon which he had great store of material. He told of the women of the South, of Sonora and Chihuahua where he had spent much of his youth, of how beautiful they were. He told of a slim little creature fifteen years old with big black eyes whom he had bought from her *peon* father, and of how she had feared him and how he had conquered her and her fear. He told of slave girls he had bought from the Navajos as children and raised for his pleasure. He told

of a French woman he had loved in Mexico City and how he had fought a duel with her husband. He rose to heights of sentimentality and delved into depths of obscenity, now speaking magniloquently of his heart and what it had suffered, and again leering and chuckling like a satyr over some tale of splendid animal desire.

Ramon, walking silent and outwardly respectful by his side, listened to all this with a strange mixture of envy and rage. He envied the old Don the rich share he had taken of life's feast. Whatver else he might be, the Don was not one of those who desire but do not dare. He had taken what he wanted. He had tasted many emotions and known the most poignant delights. And now that he was old and his blood was slow, he stood in the way of others who desired as greatly and were as avid of life as ever he had been.

Ramon felt a great bitterness that clutched at his throat and half blinded his eyes. He too loved and desired. And how much more greatly he desired than ever had this old man by his side, with his wealth and his easy satisfactions! The old Don apparently had never been thwarted, and therefore he did not know how keen and punishing a blade desire may be!

Tense between the two was the enmity that ever sunders age and youth—age seeking to keep its sovereignty of life by inoculating blind respect and reverence, and youth rebellious, demanding its own with the passion of hot blood and untried flesh.

Between Old Town and New Town flowed an irrigating ditch, which the connecting street crossed by means of an old wooden bridge. The ditch was this night full of swift water, which tore at the button willows on the bank and gurgled against the bridge timbers. As they crossed it, the idea came into Ramon's head that if a man were pushed into the brown water he would be swiftly carried under the bridge and drowned.

CHAPTER IX

THE following Saturday evening Ramon was again riding across the *mesa*, clad in his dirty hunting clothes, with his shotgun hung in the cinches of his saddle. At the start he had been undecided where he was going. Tormented by desire and bitter over the poverty which stood between him and fulfilment, he had flung the saddle on his mare and ridden away, feeling none of the old interest in the mountains, but impelled by a great need to escape the town with all its cruel spurs and resistances.

Already the rhythm of his pony's lope and the steady beat of the breeze in his face had calmed and refreshed him. The bitter, exhausting thoughts that had been plucking at his mind gave way to the idle procession of sensations, as they tend always to do when a man escapes the artificial existence of towns into the natural, animal one of the outdoors.

His visit to Archulera this time proceeded just as had all of the others, and he had never enjoyed one more thoroughly. Again the old man killed a fatted kid in his honour, and again they had a great feast of fresh brains and tripe and biscuits and coffee. Afterward, there were many cigarettes and much talk, as before, Archulera telling over again the brave wild record of his youth. And, as always, he told, just as though he had never told it before, the story of how Diego Delcasar had cheated him out of his interest in a silver mine in the Guadalupe mountains. As with each former telling he became this time more unrestrained in his denunciation of the man who had betrayed him.

"You are not like him," he assured Ramon with passionate earnestness. "You are generous, honourable! When your uncle is dead—when he is dead, I say—you will pay me the five thousand dollars which your family owes to mine. Am I right, *amigo?*"

Ramon, who was listening with only half an ear, was about to make some

off-hand reply, as he had always done before. But suddenly a strange, stirring idea flashed through his brain. Could it be? Could that be what Archulera meant? He glanced at the man. Archulera was watching him with bright black eyes—cunning, feral—the eyes of a primitive fighting man, eyes that had never flinched at dealing death.

Ramon knew suddenly that his idea was right. Blood pounded in his temples and a red mist of excitement swam before his eyes.

"Yes!" he exclaimed, leaping to his feet. "Yes! When my uncle is dead I will pay you the five thousand dollars which the estate owes you!"

The old man studied him, showing no trace of excitement save for the brightness of his eyes.

"You swear this?" he demanded.

Ramon stood tall, his head lifted, his eyes bright.

"Yes; I swear it," he replied, more quietly now. "I swear it on my honour as a Delcasar!"

CHAPTER X

THE murder of Don Diego Delcasar, which occurred about three weeks later, provided the town with an excitement which it thoroughly enjoyed.

Although there was really not a great deal to be said about the affair, since it remained from the first a complete mystery, the local papers devoted a great deal of space to it. The *Evening Journal* announced the event in a great black headline which ran all the way across the top of the first page. The right-hand column was devoted to a detailed description of the scene of the crime, while the rest of the page was occupied by a picture of the Don, by a hastily written and highly inaccurate account of his career, and by statements from prominent citizens concerning the great loss which the state had suffered in the death of this, one of its oldest and most valued citizens.

In the editorial columns the Don was described as a Spanish gentleman of the old school, and one who had always lived up to its highest traditions. The fact was especially emphasized that he had commanded the respect and confidence of both the races which made up the population of the state, and his long and honourable association in a business enterprise with a leading local attorney was cited as proof of the fact that he had been above all race antagonisms.

The morning *Herald* took a slightly different tack. Its editorial writer was a former New York newspaper man of unusual abilities who had been driven to the Southwest by tuberculosis.

In an editorial which was deplored by many prominent business men, he pointed out that unpunished murders were all too common in the state. He cited several cases like this of Don Delcasar in which prominent men had been assassinated, and no arrest had followed. Thus, only a few years before, Col. Manuel Escudero had been killed by a shot fired through the window of a saloon, and still more recently Don Solomon Estrella had been found drowned in a vat of sheep-dip on his own ranch. He cited statistics to show that the percentage of convictions in murder trials in that state was exceedingly small. Daringly, he asked how the citizens could expect to attract to the state the capital so much needed for its development, when assassination for personal and political purposes was there tolerated much as it had been in Europe during the Middle Ages. He ended by a plea that the Mounted Police should be strengthened, so that it would be capable of coping with the situation. This editorial started a controversy between the two papers which ultimately quite eclipsed in interest the fact that Don Delcasar was dead.

Meanwhile, the known facts about the murder of Don Delcasar remained few, simple, and unilluminating. About once a month the Don used to drive in his automobile to his lands in the northern part of the state. He always took the road across the *mesa*, which passed near the mouth of Domingo

Canyon and through the Scissors Pass, and he nearly always went alone.

When he was half-way across the *mesa*, the front tyres of the Don's car had been punctured by nails driven through a board and hidden in the sand of the road. Evidently the Don had risen to alight and investigate when he had been shot, for his body had been found hanging across the windshield of the car with a bullet hole through the head.

The discovery of the body had been made by a Mexican wood-cutter who was on the way to town with a load of wood. He had, of course, been held by the police and had been closely questioned, but it was easily established that he had no connection with the crime.

It was evident that the Don had been shot from ambush with a rifle, and probably from a considerable distance, but absolutely no trace of the assassin had been found. Not only the chief of police and several patrolmen and the sheriff with a posse, but also many private citizens in automobiles had rushed to the scene of the crime and joined in the search. The surrounding country was dry and rocky. Not even a trace had been found.

The motive of the murder was evidently not robbery, for nothing had been taken, although the Don carried a valuable watch and a considerable sum of money. Indeed, there was no evidence that the murderer had even approached the body.

The local police arrested as a suspect a man who was found in hiding near a water tank at the railroad station, but no evidence against him could be found and he had to be released. The sheriff extracted a confession of guilt from a sheep-herder who was found about ten miles from the scene of the crime, but it was subsequently proved by this man's relatives that he was at home and asleep at the time the crime was committed, and that he was well known to be of unsound mind.

For some days the newspapers continued daily to record the fact that a "diligent search" for the murderer was being conducted, but this search gradually came to an end along with public interest in the crime.

CHAPTER XI

THE day after the news of his uncle's murder reached him, Ramon lay on his bed in his darkened room fully dressed in a new suit of black. He was not ill and anything would have been easier for him than to lie there with nothing to do but to think and to stare at a single narrow sunbeam which came through a rent in the window blind. But it was a Mexican custom, old and revered, for the family of one recently dead to lie upon its beds in the dark and so to receive the condolences of friends and the consolations of religion.

To disregard this custom would have been most unwise for any ambitious young man, and besides, Ramon's mother clung tenaciously to the traditional Mexican ways, and she would not have tolerated any breach of them. At this moment she and her two daughters were likewise lying in their rooms, clad in new black silk and surrounded by other sorrowing females.

It was so still in the room that Ramon could hear the buzz of a fly in the vicinity of the solitary sunbeam, but from other parts of the house came occasional human sounds. One of these was an intermittent howling and wailing from the placita. This he knew was the work of two old Mexican women who made their living by acting as professional mourners. They did not wait for an invitation but hung about like buzzards wherever there was a Mexican corpse. Seated on the ground with their black shawls pulled over their heads, they wailed with astonishing endurance until the coffin was carried from the house, when they were sure of receiving a substantial gift from the grateful relatives.

Ramon resolved that he would give them ten dollars each. He felt sure they had never got so much. He was determined to do handsomely in all things connected with the funeral.

He could also hear faintly a rattle of wagons, footsteps coming from the front of the house. A peep had shown him that already a line of wagons, carriages, and buggies half a block long had formed in the street, and he could hear the arrival of another one every few minutes. These vehicles brought the numerous and poor relations of Don Delcasar who lived in the country. All of them would be there by night. Each one of them would come into Ramon's room and sit by his bedside and take his hand and express sympathy. Some of them would weep and some would groan, although all of them, like himself, were profoundly glad that the Don was dead. Ramon hoped that they would make their expressions brief. And later, he knew, all would gather in the room where the casket rested on two chairs. They would sit in a silent, solemn circle about the room, drinking coffee and wine all night. And he would be among them, trying with all his might to look properly sad and to keep his eyes open.

All the time that he lay there in enforced idleness he was longing for action, his imagination straining forward. At last his chance had come—his chance to have her. And he would have her. He felt sure of it. He was now a rich man. As soon as the will had been read and he had come into his own, he would buy a big automobile. He would go to her, he would sweep away her doubts and hesitations. He would carry her away and marry her. She would be his. . . . He closed his eyes and drew his breath in sharply. . . .

But, no; he would have to wait . . . a decent interval. And the five thousand dollars must be gotten to Archulera. That was obviously important. And, there might not be much cash. The Don had never had much ready money. He might have to sell land or sheep first. All of these things to be done, and here he lay, staring at the ceiling and listening to the wailing of old women!

There was a knock on the door.

"*Entra!*" he called.

The door opened softly and a tall, black-robed figure was silhouetted for a moment against the daylight before the door closed again.

The black figure crossed the room and sat down, by the bed, silent save for a faint rustle.

Although he could not see the face, Ramon knew that this was the priest, Father Lugaria. He knew that Father Lugaria had come to arrange for the mass over the body of Don Delcasar. He disliked Father Lugaria, and knew that the Father disliked him.

This mutual antipathy was due to the fact that Ramon seldom went to church. He had no strong convictions about religion, one way or the other. In fact, he had never given the subject any thought, except such purely practical thought as was necessary to evade certain tiresome religious duties. But the church did not dominate him as it had so long dominated his forefathers, and as it still dominated most of his race and class. Its holy orders and sounds and silences had once inspired great awe in him, but did so less and less.

There were others of his generation who showed the same indifference toward religion, and this defection of youth was a thing which the priests bitterly contested. Ramon was perfectly willing to make a polite compromise with them. If Father Lugaria had been satisfied with an occasional appearance at early mass, a perfunctory confession now and then, the two might have been friends.

But the priest made Ramon a special object of his attention. He continually went to the Doña Delcasar with complaints, and that devout woman incessantly nagged her son, holding before him always pictures of the damnation he was courting. Once in a while she even produced in him a faint twinge of fear—a recrudescence of the deep religious feeling in which he was bred—but his remorse was evanescent. The chief result of these labours on behalf

of his soul had been to turn him strongly against the priest who instigated them.

Father Lugaria seemed all kindness and sympathy now. He sat close beside Ramon and took his hand. Ramon could smell the good wine on the man's breath, and could see faintly the brightness of his eyes. The grip of the priest's hand was strong, moist, and surprisingly cold. He began to talk in the low, monotonous voice of one accustomed to much chanting, and this droning seemed to have some hypnotic quality. It seemed to lull Ramon's mind so that he could not think what he was going to say or do.

The priest expressed his sympathy. He spoke of the great and good man the Don had been. Slowly, adroitly, he approached the real question at issue which was how much Ramon would pay for a mass. The more he paid, the longer the mass would be, and the longer the mass, the speedier would be the journey of the Don's soul through purgatory and into paradise.

"O my little brother in Christ!" droned the priest in his vibrant singsong, "I must not let you neglect this last, the greatest of things which you can do for the uncle you loved. It is unthinkable, of course, that his soul should go to hell—hell, where a thousand demons torture the soul for an eternity. Hell is for those who commit the worst of sins, sins they dare not lay before God for His forgiveness, secret and terrible sins—sins like murder. But few of us go through life untouched by sin. The soul must be purified before it can enter the presence of its Maker. . . Doubtless the soul of your uncle is in purgatory, and to you is given the sweet power to speed that soul on its upward way.

"Don Delcasar, we all know, killed. . . . More than once, doubtless, he took the life of a fellow man. But he did it in combat as a soldier, as a servant of the state. . . . That is not murder. That would not doom him to hell, which is the special punishment of secret and unforgiven murder. . . . But the soul of the Don must be cleansed of these earthly stains. . . ."

The strong, cold grip of the priest held Ramon with increasing power. The monotonous, hypnotic voice went on and on, becoming ever more eloquent and confident.

Father Lugaria was a man of imagination, and the special home of his imagination was hell. For thirty years he had held despotic sway over the poor Mexicans, who made up most of his flock, and had gathered much money for the church by painting word-pictures of hell. He was a veritable artist of hell. He loved hell.

Again and again he digressed from the strict line of his argument to speak of hell. With all the vividness of a thing seen he described its flames, its fiends, the terrible stink of burning flesh and the vast chorus of agony that filled it. . . . And for some obscure reason or purpose he always spoke of hell as the special punishment of murderers. Again and again in his discourse he coupled murder and hell.

Ramon was wearied by strong emotions and short of sleep. His nerves were overstrung. This ceaseless iteration of hell and murder, murder and hell would drive him crazy, he thought. He wished mightily that the priest would have done and name his price and go. What was the sense and purpose of this endless babble about hell and murder? . . .

A sickening thought struck him like a blow, leaving him weak. What if old Archulera had confessed to the priest? Well, what if he had? A priest could not testify about what he had heard in confessional. But a priest might tell someone else. . . . Oh, God! If the man would only go and leave him to think! Hell and murder, murder and hell. The two words beat upon his brain without mercy.

He longed to interrupt the priest and beg him to leave off. But for some reason he could not. He could not even turn his head and look at the man. The priest was but a clammy grip that held him and a disembodied voice that

spoke of hell and murder. Had he done murder? And was there a hell? He had long ceased to believe in hell, but hell had been real to him as a child. His mother and his nurse had filled him with the fear of hell. He had been bred in the fear of hell. It was in his flesh and bones if not in his mind, and the priest had hypnotized his mind. Hell was real to him again. Fear of hell came up from the past, which vanishes but is never gone, and gripped him like a great ugly monster. It squeezed a cold sweat out of his body and made his skin prickle and his breath come short. . . .

The priest dropped the subject of hell, and spoke again of the mass. He mentioned a sum of money. Ramon nodded his head, muttering his assent like a sick man. The grip on his hand relaxed.

"Good-bye, my little brother," murmured the priest. "May Christ be always with you."

His gown rustled across the room, and as he opened the door Ramon saw his face for a moment—a sallow, shrewd face, bedewed with the sweat of a great effort, but wearing a smile of triumphant satisfaction.

Ramon lay sick and exhausted.

It seemed to him that there was no air in the room. He was suffocating. His body burned and prickled.

He rose and tore loose his collar. He must get out of this place, must have air and movement.

It was dusk now. The wailing of the old women had ceased. Doubtless they were being rewarded with supper.

He began stripping off his clothes, his white shirt and his new suit of black.

Eagerly rummaging in the closet, he found his old clothes, which he wore on his trips to the mountains.

In the dim light he slipped out of the house, indistinguishable from any Mexican boy that might have been about the place.

He saddled the little mare in the corral, mounted, and galloped away—through Old Town, where skinny dogs roamed in dark, narrow streets and men and women sat and smoked in black doorways—and out upon the valley road. There he spurred his mare without mercy, and they flew over the soft dust. The rush of the air in his face and the thud and quiver of living flesh under him were infinitely sweet.

He stopped at last five miles from town, on the bank of the river. It was a swift, muddy river, wandering about in a flood plain a quarter of a mile wide, and at this point chewing noisily at a low bank forested with scrubby cottonwoods.

Dismounting, he stripped and plunged into the river. It was only three feet deep, but he wallowed about in it luxuriously, finding great comfort in the caress of the cool water, and of the soft, fine sand upon the bottom, which clung about his toes and tickled the soles of his feet. Then he climbed out on the bank and stood where the breeze struck him, rubbing the water off of his slim, strong body with the flats of his hands.

When he had put on his clothes, he indulged his love of lying flat on the ground, puffing a cigarette and blowing smoke at the first stars. A hunting owl flitted over his head on muffled wing; a coyote yapped in the bushes; high up in the darkness he heard the whistle of pinions as a flock of early ducks went by.

He took air deeply into his lungs and stretched out his legs. In this place fear of hell departed from his mind as some strong liquors evaporate when exposed to the open air. The splendid healthy animal in him was again dominant, and it could scarcely conceive of death and had nothing more to do with hell than had the owl and the coyote that killed to live. Here he felt at peace with the earth beneath him and the sky above. But one thought came to disturb him and it was also sweet—the thought of a woman, her eyes full of promise, the curve of her mouth. . . . She was waiting for him, she would be his. . . . That was real. . . . Hell was a dream.

He saw now the folly of his fears about Archulera, too. Archulera never went to church. There was no danger that he would ever confess to anyone. And even if he did, he could scarcely injure Ramon. For Ramon had done no wrong. He had but promised an old man his due, righted an ancient wrong. . . . He smiled.

Slowly he mounted and rode home, filled with thoughts of the girl, to put on his mourning clothes and take his decorous place in the circle that watched his uncle's bier.

CHAPTER XII

After the Don had been duly laid to rest, and his will had been read, Ramon found himself beset by a host of duties and opportunities. Propositions of all kinds were laid before him by all kinds of men. The most important of these was a proposition from the powerful Gordon MacDougall that the two of them should form a partnership for the exploitation of Ramon's mountain lands.

This Ramon declined with much politeness. Indeed, the only agreement he made with any man was an informal one with a little wizened Mexican named Cortez, who became his assistant and chief scout at a salary of one hundred dollars a month.

In the midst of all these distractions he found time to buy and learn to run a good motor-car.

Meantime he had seen nothing of Julia. He had received a note of sympathy from her soon after his uncle's death, and he had called at the Roths' once, but had found several other callers there and no chance of being alone with her. Then she had gone away on a motor trip, from which she had just returned.

But all of this time he had been thinking of her more confidently than ever before. He was rich now, he was strong. All of the preliminaries had been finished. He could go to her and claim her.

He called her on the telephone from his office, and the Mexican maid answered. She should see if Miss Roth was in. After a long wait she reported that Miss Roth was out. He tried again that day, and a third time the next morning with a like result.

This filled him with anxious, angry bewilderment. He felt sure she had not really been out all three times. Were her mother and brother keeping his message from her? Or had something turned her against him?

He really did not know or understand this girl at all; he merely loved her and desired her with a desire which had become the ruling necessity of his life. To him she was a being of a different sort from a different world—a mystery. They had nothing in common but a rebellious discontent with life, and this glamorous, bewildering thing, so much stronger than they, so far beyond their comprehension, which they called their love.

That was the one thing he knew and counted on. He knew how imperiously it drove him, and he knew that she had felt its power, too.

He had seen it shine in her eyes, part her lips; he had heard it in her voice, and felt it tremble in her body. If only he could get to her this potent thing would carry them to its purpose through all barriers.

Angry and resolute, he set himself to a systematic campaign of telephoning. At last she answered. Her voice was level, quiet, weary.

"But I have an engagement for to-night," she told him.

"Then let me come to-morrow," he urged.

"No; I can't do that. Mother is having some people to dinner. . . ."

At last he begged her to set a date, but she refused, declared that her plans were unfixed, told him to call "some other time."

His touchy pride rebelled now. He cursed these gringoes. He hated them. He wished for the power to leave her alone, to humble her by neglect. But he knew that he did not have it. Instead he waited a few days and then

drove to the house in his car, having first carefully ascertained by watching that she was at home.

All three of them received him in their sitting-room, which they called the library. Conversation was slow and painful. Mrs. Roth and her son were icily formal, confining themselves to the most commonplace remarks. And Julia did not help him, as she had on his first visit. She looked pale and tired and carefully avoided his eyes.

When he had been there about half an hour Mrs. Roth turned to her daughter.

"Julia," she said, "if we are going to get to Mrs. MacDougall's at half-past four you must go and get ready. You will excuse her, won't you, Mr. Delcasar?"

The girl obediently went upstairs without shaking hands, and a few minutes later Ramon went away, feeling more of misery and less of self-confidence than ever before in his life.

He almost wholly neglected his work. Cortez brought him a report that MacDougall had a new agent, who was working actively in the Arriba country, but he paid no attention to it. His life seemed to have lost purpose and interest. For the first time he doubted her love. For the first time he really feared that he would lose her.

Most of his leisure was spent riding or walking about the streets, in the hope of catching a glimpse of her. He passed her house as often as he dared, and studied her movements. When he saw her in the distance he felt an acute thrill of mingled hope and misery. Only once did he meet her fairly walking with her brother, and then she either failed to see him or pretended not to.

One afternoon about five o'clock he left his office and started home in his car. A storm was piling up rapidly in big black clouds that rose from behind the eastern mountains like giants peering from ambush. It was sultry; there were loud peals of thunder, and long, crooked flashes of lightning. At this season of late summer the weather staged such a pretentious display almost every afternoon, and it rained heavily in the mountains; but the showers only reached the thirsty *mesa* and valley lands about one day in four.

Ramon drove home slowly, gloomily wondering whether it would rain and hoping that it would. A Southwesterner is always hoping for rain, and in his present mood the rush and beat of a storm would have been especially welcome.

His hopes were soon fulfilled. There was a cold blast of wind, carrying a few big drops, and then a sudden, drumming downpour that tore up the dust of the street and swiftly covered it into a sea of mud cut by yellow rivulets.

As his car roared down the empty street he glimpsed a woman standing in the shelter of a big cottonwood tree, cowering against its trunk. A quick thrill shot through his body. He jammed down the brake so suddenly that his car skidded and sloughed around. He carefully turned and brought up at the curb.

She started at sight of him, as he ran across the sidewalk toward her.

"Come on, quick!" he commanded, taking her by the arm. "I'll get you home."

Before she had time to say anything he had her in the car, and they were driving toward the Roth house. By the time they had reached it the first strength of the shower was spent, and there was only a light, scattering rain, with a rift showing in the clouds over the mountains.

He deliberately passed the house, putting on more speed as he did so.

"But . . . I thought you were going to take me home," she said, putting a hand on his arm.

"I'm not," he announced, without looking around.

His hands and eyes were fully occupied with his driving, but a great suspense held his breath. The hand left his arm, and he heard her settle back in her seat with a sigh. A great warm wave of joy surged through him.

He took the mountain road, which was a short cut between Old Town and the mountains, seldom used except by wood wagons. Within ten minutes they were speeding across the *mesa*. The rain was over and the clouds running across the sky in tatters before a fresh west wind. Before them the rolling gray-green waste of the *mesa*, spotted and veiled with silver waters, reached to the blue rim of the mountains—empty and free as an undiscovered world.

He slowed his car to ten miles an hour and leaned back, steering with one hand. The other fell upon hers, and closed over it. For a time they drove along in silence, conscious only of that electrical contact, and of the wind playing in their faces, and the soft, rhythmical hum of the great engine.

At the crest of a rise he stopped the car and stood up, looking all about at the vast, quiet wilderness, filling his lungs with air. He liked that serene emptiness. He had always felt at peace with these still, desolate lands that had been the background of most of his life. Now, with the consciousness of the woman beside him, they filled him with a sort of rapture, an ecstasy of reverence that had come down to him perhaps from savage forbears who had worshipped the Earth Mother with love and awe.

He dropped down beside her again and without hesitation gathered her into his arms.

After a moment he held her a little away from him and looked into her eyes.

"Why wouldn't you let me come to see you? Why did you treat me that way?" he pleaded.

She dropped her eyes.

"They made me."

"But why? Because I'm a Mexican? And does that make any difference to you?"

"Oh, I can't tell you. . . . They say awful things about you. I don't believe them. No; nothing about you makes any difference to me."

He held her close again.

"Then you'll go away with me?"

"Yes," she answered slowly, nodding her head. "I'll go anywhere with you."

"Now!" he demanded. "Will you go now? We can drive through Scissors Pass to Abol on the Southeastern and take a train to Denver. . . ."

"Oh, no, not now," she pleaded. "Please, not now. . . . I can't go like this. . . ."

"Yes, now," he urged. "We'll never have a better chance. . . ."

"I beg you, if you love me, don't make me go now. I must think . . . and get ready. . . . Why, I haven't even got any powder for my nose."

They both laughed. The tension was broken. They were happy.

"Give me a little while to get ready," she proposed, "and I'll go when you say."

"You promise?"

"Cross my heart. . . . On my life and honour. Please take me home now, so they won't suspect anything. If only nobody sees us! Please hurry. It'll be dark pretty soon. You can write to me. It's so lonely out here!"

He turned his car and drove slowly townward, his free hand seeking hers again. It was dusk when they reached the streets. Stopping his car in the shadow of a tree, he kissed her and helped her out.

He sat still and watched her out of sight. A tinge of sadness and regret crept into his mind, and as he drove homeward it grew into an active discontent with himself. Why had he let her go? True, he had proved her love, but now she was to be captured all over again. He ought to have taken her. He had been a fool. She would have gone. She had begged him not to take her, but if he had insisted she would have gone.

He had been a fool!

CHAPTER XIII

Two days after this ride, when he called her up, he received the disturbing information that she was leaving town for several weeks at least. This,

while disappointing, was not unnatural. The Roths were going to the mountains, as did almost everyone who could, during the hot weather of late summer. It was the reason Julia gave which disturbed him most.

"I'm afraid someone saw us together the other day," she told him in a very guarded voice.

She promised to write him when she would return and made him promise not to try to see her in the meantime.

With that she bade him good-bye and left him to confused and bitter reflections.

He had been proceeding on the assumption that the Roths were ignorant of his real relations with Julia, but this made it evident that they were not as stupid as he had believed. It struck him suddenly that it was they who were running away with the girl, not he. And they might leave the country with her at any time. . . .

It behoved him to move quickly. He must get his affairs in order and then take her. . . . Yes, whether she wanted to or not. The first time he got her in his car again she was his. . . .

Meantime, he realized, he faced the very crisis of his affairs. He learned from Cortez, whom he had sent to Arriba County in the capacity of a scout, that MacDougall was working actively in that region. He had several agents in the field, and he was rumoured to have purchased the aid and influence of several Mexicans of wealth and political prestige. His object was to buy enough of the land in the San Antonio valley so that he could control the railroad right-of-way, and also the best of the water on the lower range lands. If he could accomplish these two things he could practically force Ramon to sell out to him at a low price, for the Delcasar land would then be of little value by itself. In a word, it was a struggle between Delcasar and MacDougall to see who should obtain the holdings of various small owners and the political and financial domination of the country.

In this struggle MacDougall had the advantage of a much larger ready capital. Ramon could buy only very slowly, as he made money from sales of timber and wool. But he had the incalculable advantage of being a Mexican. His blood, which worked so subtly against him in the town, was in that far region his chief asset. He could stir up the hatred and distrust for the usurping race which are somewhere in the heart of every Mexican. He could assert the influence which was his by right of birth. The important thing was that he should go to Arriba County and mingle with these, his people, who were the chief source of his strength.

CHAPTER XIV

He had resolutely put the thought of Julia as much out of his mind as possible. He had conquered his disappointment at not being able to see her for a month, and had resolved to devote that month exclusively to hard work. And now came a small, square letter with a disturbing scent of lavender, and a stamp stuck upside down near the middle of the envelope.

"I will be in town to-morrow when you get this," she wrote, "but only for a day or two. We are going to move up to the capital for the rest of the year. Gordon is going to stay here now. Just mother and I are coming down to pack up our things. You can come and see me to-morrow evening."

It was astonishing, it was disturbing, it was incomprehensible. And it did not fit in with his plans. He had intended to go North and return before she did; then, with all his affairs in order, ask her to go away with him. Cortez had already sent word that Ramon was coming to Arriba County. He could not afford a change of plans now. But the prospect of seeing her again filled him with pleasure, sent a sort of weakening excitement tingling through his body.

And what did it mean that he was to be allowed to call on her? Had she, by any chance, won over her mother

and brother? No; he couldn't believe it. But he went to her house that evening shaken by great hopes and anticipations.

She wore a black dress that left her shoulders bare, and set the slim perfection of her little figure. Her face was flushed and her eyes were deep. How much more beautiful she was than the image he carried in his mind! He had been thinking of her all this while, and yet he had forgotten how beautiful she was.

He could think of nothing to say at first, but he'd her by both hands and looked at her with eyes of wonder and desire. He felt a fool because his knees were weak and he was tremulous. But a happy fool!

The touch and the sight of her seemed to dissolve his strength, and also the hardness and the bitterness that life had bred in him, the streak of animal ferocity that struggle brought out in him. He was all desire, but desire bathed in tenderness and hope. She made him feel at once as long ago he had felt in church when the music and the pageantry and sweet odours of the place had filled his childish spirit with a strange sense of harmony. He had felt small and unworthy, yet happy and forgiven. So now he felt in her presence that he was black and bestial beside her, but that possession of her would somehow wash him clean and bring him peace.

When he tried to draw her to him she shook her head, not meeting his eyes, and freed herself gently.

"No, no. I must tell you. . . ." She led him to a seat, and went on, looking down at a toe that played with a design in the carpet. "I must explain. I promised mother that if she would let me see you this once to tell you, I would never try to see you again."

There was a long silence, during which he could feel his heart pounding and could see that she breathed quickly.

Then suddenly he took her face in both hot hands and turned it toward him, made her meet his eyes.

"But, of course you didn't mean that?" he said.

She struggled weakly against his strength.

"I don't know. I thought I did. . . . It's terrible. You know—I wrote you —someone saw us together. Gordon and mother found out about it. I won't tell you all that they said, but it was awful. It made me angry, and they found out that I love you. It had a terrible effect on Gordon. It made him worse. I can't tell you how awful it is for me. I love you. But I love him, too. And to think I'm hurting him when he's sick, when I've lived in the hope he would get well. . . ."

She was breathing hard now. Her eyes were bright with tears. All her defences were down, her fine dignity vanished. When he took her in his arms she struggled a little at first; then yielded with closed eyes to his hot kisses.

Afterward they talked a little, but not to much purpose. He had important things to tell her, they had plans to make. But their great disturbing hunger for each other would not let them think of anything else. Their conversation was always interrupted by hot, confusing embraces.

The clock struck eleven, and she jumped up.

"I promised to make you go home at eleven," she told him.

"But I must tell you. . . . I have to leave town for a while." He found his tongue suddenly. Briefly he outlined to her the situation he faced with regard to his estate. He made her understand that he was going forth to fight for both their fortunes.

"I can't do it, I won't go, unless I know I am to have you," he finished. "Everything I have done, everything I am going to do, is for you. If I lose you I lose everything. You promise to go with me?"

His eyes were burning with earnestness, and hers were wide with admiration, deep with love. He did not really understand her, nor she him. Unalterable differences of race and tradition

and temperament stood between them. They had little in common save a great primitive hunger. But that, nonetheless, for the moment genuinely transfigured and united them.

She drew a deep breath.

"Yes. You must promise not to try to see me until then. When you are ready, let me know."

She threw back her head, opening her arms to him. For a moment she hung limp in his embrace; then pushed him away and ran upstairs, leaving him to find his way out alone.

He walked home slowly, trying to straighten out his thoughts. Her presence seemed still to be all about him. One of her hairs was tangled about a button of his coat; her powder and the scent of her were all over his shoulder; the recollection of her kisses smarted sweetly on his mouth. He was weak, confused, ridiculously happy. But he knew that he would carry North with him greater courage and purpose than ever before he had known.

CHAPTER XV

THREE weeks later Ramon was driving across the *mesa* west of town, bound for the state capital.

Those three weeks had been filled with a tonic sense of power and of success. He had spent most of the time riding about the mountains of Arriba County, hobnobbing with sheep herders and country storekeepers, attending bailes and fiestas, arguing, cajoling, threatening, with an eloquence he had never known he possessed. And the gist of his message had been always that the Mexicans must stand together against the gringoes. He had "played the race issue" as the politicians put it, for all it was worth. Always he had made it clear that race loyalty meant having nothing to do with MacDougall. He knew that he had almost destroyed MacDougall's plans and that he was in a fair way to realize his own.

Then had come the final, the real triumph, which gave all the rest of it point and meaning. In his pocket was a letter consisting of a single sentence, hastily scrawled in a large, upright hand on lavender-scented notepaper. The sentence was:

"Meet you at the southwest corner of the plaza Tuesday at seven-thirty. Love. J. R."

A great deal of trouble and anxiety had preceded the receipt of that message.

First, he had written her a letter that was unusually long and exuberant for him, telling her of his success and that now he was ready to come and get her in accordance with their agreement, suggesting a time and place.

Three days of cumulative doubt and agony had gone by without a reply.

Then he had tried to reach her by long-distance telephone, but without success.

Finally he had wired, although he knew that a telegram is a risky vehicle for confidential business.

Now he had her answer, the answer that he wanted. His spirit was released and leapt forward, leaving resentments and doubts far behind.

It was eighty miles to the state capital, the road was good all the way, the day bright and cool. His route led across the *mesa*, through the Scissors Pass, and then north and east along the foot of the mountains.

Immense and empty the country stretched before him—a land of far-flung levels and even farther mountains; a land which makes even the sea, with its near horizons, seem little; a land which has always produced men of daring because it inspires a sense of freedom without any limit save what daring sets.

He had dared and won. He was going to take the sweet prize of his daring. The engine of his big car sang to him a song of victory and desire. He rejoiced in the sense of power under his hand. He opened the throttle wider and the car answered with more speed, licking up the road like a hungry monster. How easily he mastered time and distance for his purpose!

He was to have her, she would be his. So sang the humming motor and the wind in his ears. Her white arms and her red mouth, her splendid eyes that feared and yielded! She was waiting for him! More speed. He conquered the hills with a roar of strength to spare, topped the crests, and sped down the long slopes like a bird coming to earth.

He was to have her, she would be his. Could it be true? The great machine that carried him to their tryst roared an affirmative, the wind sang of it, his blood quickened with anticipation incredibly keen. And always the distance that lay between them was falling behind in long, gray, passive miles.

CHAPTER XVI

He had reached his destination a little after six. As he drove slowly through the streets of the little dusty town, the mood of exaltation that had possessed him during the trip died down. He was intent, worried, practical. Having registered at the hotel, he got a handful of time-tables and made his plans with care. They would drive to a town twenty-five miles away, be married, and catch the California Limited. There would just be time. Once he had her in his car, nothing could stop them.

The plaza or public square about which the old town was built, and which had been its market-place in the old days, was now occupied by a neat little park with a bandstand. Retail stores and banks fronted on three sides of it, but the fourth was occupied by a long, low adobe building which was very old and had been converted into a museum of local antiquities. It was dark and lifeless at night, and in its shadow-filled verandah he was to meet her.

He had his car parked beside the spot ten minutes ahead of time. It was slightly cold now, with a gusty wind whispering about the streets and tearing big, papery leaves from the cottonwood trees in the park. The plaza was empty save for an occasional passer-by whose quick footfalls rang sharply in the silence. Here and there was an illuminated shop window. The drug-store on the opposite corner showed a bright interior, where two little boys devoured ice-cream sodas with solemn rapture. Somewhere up a side street a choir was practising a hymn, making a noise infinitely doleful.

He had a bear-skin to wrap her in, and he arranged this on the seat beside him and then tried to wait patiently. He sat very tense and motionless, except for an occasional glance at his watch, until it showed exactly seven-thirty. Then he got out of his car and began walking first to one side of the corner and then to the other, for he did not know from which direction she would come. At twenty-five minutes of eight he was angry, but in another ten minutes anger had given way to a dull, heavy disappointment that seemed to hold him by the throat and make it difficult to swallow. Nonetheless he waited a full hour before he started up his car and drove slowly back to the hotel.

On the way he debated with himself whether he should try to communicate with her to-night or wait until the next day. He knew that the wisest thing would be to wait until the next day and send her a note, but he also knew that he could not wait. He would find out where she lived, call her on the telephone, and learn what had prevented her from keeping the appointment. He had desperate need to know that something besides her own will had kept her away.

When he went to the hotel desk, the clerk handed him a letter.

"This was here when you registered, I think," he said. "But I didn't know it. I'm sorry."

When he saw the handwriting of the address he was filled with commotion. Here, then, was her explanation. This would tell him why she had failed him. This, in all probability, would make all right.

He went to his room to read it, sat down on the edge of the bed and ripped

the envelope open with an impatient finger.

The letter was dated two days earlier —the day after she had received his telegram:

"I don't know what to say," she wrote, "but it doesn't matter much. You will despise me anyway, and I despise myself. But I can't help it—honestly I can't. I meant to keep my promise and I would have kept it, but they found your telegram and mother read it—by mistake, of course. I ought to have had sense enough to burn it. You can't imagine how awful it has been. Mother said the most terrible things about you, things she had heard. And she said that I would be ruining my life and hers. I said I didn't care, because I loved you. I can't tell you what an awful quarrel we had! And I wouldn't have given in, but she told Gordon and he was so terribly angry. He said it was a disgrace to the family, and he began to cough and had a hæmorrhage and we thought he was going to die. Mother said he probably would die unless I gave you up.

"That finished me. I couldn't do anything after that—I just couldn't. There was nothing but misery in sight either way, so what was the use? I've lost all my courage and all my doubts have come back. I do love you—terribly. But you are so strange, so different. And I don't think I would have made the right kind of a wife for you, or that we would have gotten along or anything. I try to comfort myself by thinking it's all for the best, but it doesn't really comfort me at all. I never knew people could be as miserable as I am now. I don't think it's fair.

"When you get this I will be on my way to New York and nearly there. We are going to sail for Europe immediately. I will never see you again. I will always love you.

"JULIA."

Rage possessed him at first—the rage of defeated desire, of injured pride, of a passionate, undisciplined nature crossed and beaten.

He flung the letter on the floor, and strode up and down the room, looking about for something to smash or tear.

So she was that kind of a creature—a miserable, whimpering fool that would let an old woman and a sick man rule her! She was afraid her brother might die. What an excuse! And he had killed, or at least sanctioned killing, for her sake. There was nothing he would not have dared or done to have her. And here she had the soul of a sheep!

But no—perhaps that was not it. Perhaps she had been playing with him all along, had never had any idea of marrying him—because he was a Mexican!

Bitter was this thought, but it died as his anger died. Something that sat steady and clear inside of him told him that he was a fool.

He was reading the letter again, and he knew it was all truth.

"There was nothing but misery in sight either way," she had written.

Suddenly he understood. Suffering and an awakened imagination had given him insight. For the first time in his life he realized the feelings of another. He realized how much he had asked of this girl, who had all her life been ruled, who had never tasted freedom nor practised self-reliance. He saw now that she had rebelled and had fought against the forces and fears that oppress youth, as had he, and that she had been bewildered and overcome.

His anger was gone. All hot emotion was gone. In its place was a great loneliness, tinged with pity. He looked at the letter again. Its handwriting showed signs of disturbance in the writer, but she had not forgotten to scent it with that faint, delightful perfume which was for ever associated in his mind with her. It summoned the image of her with a vividness he could not bear.

But courage and pride are not killed

at a blow. He threw the letter aside and shook himself sharply, like a man just awake trying to shake off the memory of a nightmare. She was gone, she was lost. Well, what of it? There were many other women in the world, many beautiful women. And he was strong now, successful. One woman could not hurt him by her refusal.

He tried resolutely to put her out of his mind, and to think of his business, of his plans. But these things which had glowed so brightly in his imagination just a few hours before were suddenly as dead as cinders.

He knew that he cared little for dollars and lands in themselves. His nature demanded a romantic object, and this love had given him. Love had found him a wretch and a weakling, and had made him suddenly strong and ruthless, bringing out all the colours of his being, dark and bright, making life suddenly intense and purposeful. And she had meant so much to him besides love. To have won her would have been to win a great victory over the gringoes—over that civilization, alien to him in race and temper, which antagonized and yet fascinated him, with which he was forced to grapple for his life.

She was gone, he had lost her. Perhaps it was just as well, after all, he told himself, speaking out of his pride and his courage. But in his heart was a great bitterness.

In his heart he knew that the gringoes had beaten one more Delcasar.

PRAYER BEFORE VAUDEVILLE

By Leonard Hall

GIVE me the mind of a child,
That the stout monologist's ponderous puns may again set me rolling in my chair.
Give me the ears of a child,
That the tooting of the Seven Saxophone Sinners may strike a pleasant answering discord in my breast.
Give me the eyes of a child,
That the comedienne in pink tights may seem as bewitchingly lovely as she did in 1889.

REMORSE is regret that one took a bad chance and let two good ones go.

THE COME-BACK

By Ford Douglas

I

THE third day after the operation, McCobb lay abed and took stock of himself. Painfully turning his head from the annoying glare of the window, he closed his eyes and reviewed a life that had begun on a small scrub-oak farm and now tarried in an expensive room in a private hospital. In print it would have been a dull story, save for the money-grubbing part of it. Still, the accumulation of a million is not without interest, as the movies bear witness, and his career might have been a huge success if shown on the screen. For, starting in life with little more than a round haircut and a two-dollar bill, McCobb had plodded his way upward to fortune. He was rich. He was the Wheelbarrow King.

But money had brought no happines to Abner McCobb. The world seemed to keep a jump ahead of him; contentment lay just beyond his grasp.

His thoughts went back now ten years to the day when he purchased his first silk shirt. It was his first extravagance. He rememberd that his joy was short-lived, for it soon came to his notice that the real devils at the Elks' Club wore diamond rings. So he bought a ring—a big one. But a six-carat diamond is unhappy afoot, and necessarily an automobile came next. Then he found that he was just getting into things, just getting started, for in the matter of motors there are the firm and unyielding laws of caste, and seated in his Tin Lizzie, McCobb discovered that the real—the Rolls-Royce—world lay beyond the horizon.

And so, on and on, year after year, happiness kept just beyond his clutching fingers. Stubborn and persistent, he still pursued the rainbow, and now he staked all on a surgeon's skill. A few days would tell the tale.

When Dr. Paul Picardi made his great announcement, a blasé and war-weary world suddenly sat up and took notice. An eminent surgeon was Picardi, an authority, and a man of more than nation-wide reputation.

The importance of his discovery was of the greatest, for he had at last obtained that which had baffled the savants of the ages—the return of youth! It was a miracle long sought. The aged Ponce de Leon had searched for it in magical waters; Dr. Brown-Séquard had striven for it with the hypodermic needle; the great metaphysicist, Dr. J. L. Mourggan, had neared success with an involved mental process, a course of hypnotic suggestion and psychological instruction; and a vast horde followed, proclaiming astounding discoveries in everything from rabbit glands and sassafras teas to barefoot cures and radium stews. But, one by one, these fevered dreams fell before investigation, and the world fell back again into apathetic indifference. Now came Picardi and his marvellous scalpel, and once more the aged and the middle-aged brightened with hope.

The published accounts of Picardi's experiments interested McCobb vastly. He was sixty-five, a widower, and childless. He had given the wheelbarrow the best years of his life. With him it had been a great passion. Studying its intricate details, he made

the vehicle what it is to-day. It became universal. And in every quarter of the globe there is a McCobb barrow wherever there is an Irishman to fill it.

Unfortunately, when riches came McCobb retired. It was a great mistake, for better men than McCobb had tried it and failed miserably. Idleness is an art perfected only after years of practice. There is no short cut, no golden road. But McCobb did not know this, so with fatuous confidence he essayed society—and golf.

In the outdoor sport of golf his experience was not entirely happy. The very first day some one stole his ball, he said, and in great heat he resigned from the club. Followed, then, sundry adventures in the world of fashion. Appendicitis had long since gone out of vogue, but he acquired blood pressure and was one of the very first to have X-ray pictures taken of his teeth. This distinguished him for a time, occasioning considerable envy among his new friends. But even this glamour could not last always, so, following a literary movement of his circle, he tried reading a book—and this proved the turning point in his career.

McCobb found the book interesting, and he finished it within the year. Harold Bell's novel brought to him many things of which he had no previous knowledge: Adventure, romance, love. It thrilled him as nothing else had since he quit the wheelbarrow business. Here was something new, and he marvelled that an author had not stumbled on the theme before.

Under the inspiration of Harold Bell's genius, McCobb emerged from his shell. He became a reader of the clothing ads, and he bought the brand of soft collars guaranteed to be worn by the movie stars.

"Yet, with it all, there seemed at times to be a certain something lacking. He found himself doubting his real interest and wondering if he were not a victim of clever propaganda. For months he pondered over this, and then suddenly one day it came to him that the disturbing influence was Age. He became greatly discouraged.

Then came the announcement of Dr. Picardi that startled the world. With little more than the knife, the surgeon said, he could turn back the wheels of time. The old could be made young and live again their allotted years—for a consideration. It amounted almost to reincarnation, and McCobb, cheated of his first manhood by the wheelbarrow, resolved at once to offer himself to the scalpel.

II

"How does the patient feel this morning?"

It was the nurse speaking, and McCobb was pleasurably surprised at her appearance.

He had taken little notice of her before other than a listless appraisement that she was a dowdy fat woman. Now, however, her fair, fresh plumpness became a matter of immediate interest to the convalescent, and he reflected that his previous judgment had been hasty and ill-considered. He parted his thin lips and smiled up at her brightly.

"Much better, much better, thank you," he replied. "Where do you live?"

"Huh? Where do I live?" The fat woman stared at him a little startled, suspecting for the moment delirium.

"Now be quiet, don't fret," she soothed, "and you'll soon be out."

She reached for his pulse, whereat he seized her hand and squeezed it. Nor was this all, for the refrain of a popular waltz song came to him, to which he immediately gave voice:

"Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart," he yodelled.

This surprised even himself, for never before had he attempted the vocal art. But the nurse experienced a greater emotion. With a hysterical shriek, she fled the room.

Marvelling at his indiscretion and now apprehensive of the result, McCobb lay nervously alert. He expected to be disciplined.

But, to his relief, when Picardi came into the room he was smiling in happy excitement.

"Mr. McCobb," he said, "from what the nurse tells me the operation has been a perfect success. I congratulate you."

III

A WEEK later McCobb walked out of the hospital and into a new world. On one side of the threshold he left the old, sordid, money-grubbing life; and on the other he faced rose-tinted dreams of youth, romance, and adventure. He had shed his skin like a locust. The wheelbarrow business seemed as of a bygone age, and now the primrose path lay before him.

He felt confident—sure of himself—for the last few days had revealed to him his transformation. He had the vigour of a cave man, and he gloried in the fact that no less than three nurses had resigned, unable to withstand his heroic love-making. And he was elated, too, at the great promise of the outside world. For during the past week every mail had brought him scores of letters from the love-lorn in every walk of life—from spinsters, widows, maidens, and matrons. They were ardent letters, descriptions, photographs, and specifications, and the burden of them all was that the writers desired to join in holy wedlock the "revitalized millionaire."

A nation-wide publicity had done this. The good doctor was firmly of the opinion that advertising paid, and though the name of his patient was withheld, Picardi saw to it that the success of his operation did not go unnoticed. The yellows had pages about it, frequently with pictures.

McCobb had planned his campaign carefully, and from the hospital he drove direct to a clothing store—the kind that outfits young men and high-school boys. There he purchased an entire new wardrobe. A soft felt hat of green with a prismatic band; a skimpy coat with a strap across the kidneys; ankle length trousers; a gorgeous purple tie, yellow shoes and lavender socks. One can only be young twice in one's life, he told himself, and he denied himself nothing.

Equipped and apparelled now to his liking, he set off down the street with a keen eye for the adventures that were to start forthwith. It was spring, a rare day of blue skies cleared after a morning of warm rain. The clean, humid air touched his cheeks with a delightful sense of coolness. The world was McCobb's oyster, and throwing back his shoulders, he swung his cane as he hummed the refrain of the waltz song.

"*Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart—*"

He stopped suddenly to stare. It was five o'clock, quitting time, and out of the Ten-Cent Store came a group of girls. They were all good-looking, but the one in front was indeed a daughter of the gods. She was young, about eighteen, dark, and with eyes of midnight. Her teeth were perfect, her rosebud of a mouth as red as a lipstick could make it, and the colour scheme of her soft cheeks—though slightly enhanced by art—was none the less alluring. In all, she was the most rapturously beautiful creature McCobb had ever seen, and he turned and followed her.

At the corner the girls stopped, waiting apparently for a street-car.

Then, with beating heart, McCobb approached. He had framed no form of attack; of experience he had none; to him the whole art of flirtation was a sealed book. He trusted to inspiration alone.

The slim young brunette suddenly stopped talking. She was in the middle of a sentence, and her utterance has never been completed to this day. For immediately in front a large, horse-faced man had deliberately winked at her. Now he was leering in a hideous grin that disclosed his long, gold-filled teeth. Her peril was great—she knew that from the movies—but for the moment her astonished indignation overcame her fear.

"Say! How do yuh git like that?" she demanded, slipping her gum behind her pearly back teeth.

Her friends had now noticed the grinning McCobb, and they crowded about, offering both moral and vocal support.

"It's a pleasant afternoon," offered McCobb, twisting an imaginary moustache. "Delightful, I should say, for a stroll."

"Well, what do yuh know 'bout that!" exclaimed the beautiful one.

"Soak him, Madge," advised one of her friends. "Wallop him!"

Without hesitation the frail young working-girl acted.

With a circular movement of her arm she brought a handbag, heavily freighted with a powder puff and an expired street-car transfer, down on McCobb's head. The blow was not overpowering, yet for the moment the Wheelbarrow King was dazed. Pedestrians were gathering around, and out of the tail of his eye McCobb saw a traffic policeman approaching.

The sudden terror of arrest seized him—and then, following a primal instinct, he turned and fled.

Down the middle of the street he ran with a shouting rabble behind. Fear gave him wings. He dodged in and out of the traffic, then through the arcade of an office building and out into a side street, where he caught a passing taxi an instant before collapse. It was a narrow escape.

The next morning McCobb shivered as he read of his adventure in the newspapers. He thought, though, that Madge's pictures did not do her justice; and he disagreed with her that the unknown scoundrel was a white-slaver and that the knave had made three distinct jabs at her with a long and shining needle.

It was a lesson, and he resolved to take no more chances. The very thought of his Jekyll-Hyde existence being discovered brought terror to him. He pictured the flaring headlines and the columns of merciless publicity that would follow such a calamity, and he wisely determined to keep out of the down-town section, at least for a while.

This resolution, however, seriously interfered with all amusement. It shut him off from all cafés, theatres, and picture shows, the full enjoyment of which, now being an idle youth, he had promised himself.

There was nothing left but an amusement park in the suburbs—a sort of rickety wooden stockyards known as "White City." He had never been there. He had even forgotten that there was such a place. In his other days if he had given thought to it at all, which was improbable, it would have been that it was a resort for the half-witted—a bedlam of the shrieking proletariat, looping the loop, popping away at painted targets and riding miniature railroads. And he would have been right, for it was all that. But, as a thorough canvass of the advertised attractions offered nothing else, he put on his hat and sallied forth.

IV

At the great stucco gate of White City he had, to his surprise, some difficulty in entrance. For it was a holiday, it seemed, and the park had been leased for the afternoon by the union cohorts of the meat-packing trade. However, a dollar bill is a universal passport, and with a grand Prisoner-of-Zenda air McCobb slipped his credential into the palm of a Lithuanian committeeman and was passed across the frontier.

Once inside, McCobb's interest was immediate.

The place was crowded—a vast throng of happy unionists, men, women, and children. Never had he seen such a tribe. Such Herculean butchers! Such Gargantuan beef-boners! Such Falstaffian pig-stickers! And, too, there were the workers of the frail sex—canners, labellers—all much beribboned and bebadged and noisily happy. It was a gala sight.

The band played and the hilarious pig-stickers rode furiously up and down

the shoot-the-chutes, whirled madly on the merry-go-rounds, devoured miles of frankfurters, and danced to perspiring exhaustion to the music of a three-piece coon jazz orchestra.

Now, had not McCobb's youthful get-up aroused the risibilities of a certain little minx, the day might have passed without undue incident to the Wheelbarrow King. But Lena Swartzenheimer had a bump of humour, and when her eyes fell on McCobb she smiled broadly.

It was unfortunate. For McCobb grinned back, whereat Miss Swartzenheimer laughed aloud.

McCobb felt an atavistic surge. His jugular bulged, and once more he was the cave-man.

From the taffy-stand he followed her to the shooting gallery, and then to the Wienie Palace, and from there to the band pavilion. Occasionally she glanced back at him—a smiling packing-house vampire. It was too much for McCobb, and throwing caution to the winds, he gave her an owlish wink and then a smart bit of banter, to wit: "O you kiddo!"

"Say! Where do you think you are?"

A tall, gaunt, bean-pole of a woman, whom he had noticed before, stood unfortunately in his line of vision. Her manner was angry, as befits outraged femininity, and she clutched in her large hands an enormous umbrella. On her flat, though heaving, breast a wide and long red badge was pinned, attracting McCobb's eyes mesmerically. He read the shining silver letters: "Local 112, Lady Sausage-Stuffers' Union."

"Say! I don't let no guy insult me. I'm a lady, I am!"

McCobb paled. And well he might, for the glitter in the sausage-stuffer's eyes told him that she was in no gentle mood. Excuses, he knew, would be useless; in diplomacy there might be a chance.

"My mistake, madam," he began suavely. "I thought you a very dear friend of mine, an actress and a very charming young woman, I assure you."

"Don't try to kid *me!*" exclaimed the giantess, raising her voice. "You can't git by with that kind of stuff!"

"Well," said McCobb doggedly, "if you want the truth I was speaking to the young lady over there."

He made a gesture in the general direction of Miss Swartzenheimer, who, perceiving the trouble, had wisely vanished.

A quick backward glance of the angry Amazon confirmed her opinion.

"Liar! What lady? I don't see no lady. You can't stall *me*. Your remark was directed to me, and to me alone."

McCobb endeavoured to pass, but standing directly in front of him she budged not an inch.

"You gotta 'pologize, that's what you gotta do. And right here and now!"

McCobb's anger flared. He was innocent, at least as to her, and he had a fleeting, though mistaken, idea that right, truth and justice would prevail.

"Madam, why in the name of God should I speak to you? You are old, madam, and ugly, and you have a hook-nose, and, moreover, madam, you are cock-eyed."

It was the truth. McCobb's statement was accurate. Yet the truth availed him nothing. For with a sudden shriek of fury the unionist stuffer of sausages charged him He felt the impact of her cotton umbrella—and he fled.

The pursuit was on. It was a hundred yards to the park gate but he made it, knocking over a score of men, women and children in his flight. Through the stucco portals he bounded, followed by a large part of three thousand packing-house workers. There were cries of "Catch him!" "Hang him!" "Lynch him!"—all of which served to give wings to his flying feet.

The butchers and pig-stickers were too wide of beam for speed. They were cargo boats. But the sausage-stuffer was tall and loosely constructed. She covered the ground in an amaz-

ing manner, and when within range unlimbered her umbrella with great accuracy and power.

McCobb, in desperation, took the middle of the street, where the ground was soft from a recent rain; but the sausage lady proved a good mud horse and in this running belaboured him unmercifully. He went back to the sidewalk, and by a supreme effort distanced the mob by a few yards.

A miraculously fortunate thing now happened.

Down a side street came an Irish funeral. It was an imposing spectacle, for the deceased had been a great patriot and a member of many orders. There were a number of bands, a host of gaily coloured banners, and a mile or more of sturdy Gaelic citizenry in carriages and afoot.

Under a lesser stress of circumstance McCobb might have tarried to witness the passage of the procession. But he didn't. The business in hand was urgent and compelling, and with a single flying leap he passed in front of the hearse, and, gaining the curb on the other side, continued his flight.

Now came the yelling packing-house pursuers. They were mostly of Hunnish birth or ancestry—and they attempted to pass through the Irish funeral!

It was another Verdun. They did not pass. It was a *divertissement* gladly welcomed by the mourners and right happily did they meet the assault. That a riot call was sent in, and that there was a vast clanging of hospital ambulance gongs for an hour afterwards, did not interest McCobb. Hatless, his clothing in rags, and his body covered with welts, he continued his flight.

At last a large building loomed before him. He recognized it and a great feeling of relief swept over him. He ran through the carriage gate, slamming it behind him.

V

It was five o'clock and, in the operating-room, Dr. Picardi had changed his clothes and was preparing to leave. The door opened and a breathless, haggard, mud-covered apparition strode across the threshold.

Without a word the intruder divested himself of his tattered garments and, throwing himself on the operating-table, turned to the astonished surgeon with, "It's no use, Doc. Make me what I was."

HILLTOP

By Muna Lee

THE windflowers fluttered purple and white
And the maple-leaves blossomed with sun;
The redbuds blazed out from the winding creek
And the willow's loose hair was undone.

And because I was in love with the sun and the wind
And the spring blooming wild and new,
I stopped on the wind-ruffled crest of the hill
And lifted my lips to you.

THE DANCING DOG

By J. B. Hawley

I

FOR five years Mrs. Warren's house in Park Lane has been closed or rented to aspiring Colonials. And London knows Mrs. Warren no more.

Yet time was when she ruled her set—that absurd yet fashionable set sometimes called "The Triflers"—with the limitless powers of a Russian Catherine. Occasionally someone mentions her name, but in those tones and accents usually reserved for use in speaking of the dead. Women who were once her friends pretend never to have known her; men smile at each other with that knowing, sneering smile with which they usually honour mention of a woman of a certain class.

And Mrs. Warren? This winter she is living in a quiet, out-of-the-way hotel in Monte Carlo. Last winter found her on the Pacific Coast in company with the lesser lights of the "movie" world. Next winter will find her—where? . . .

All of which is of very little interest to anyone except Mrs. Warren herself and one other—a bland, ascetic-looking Chinaman, sitting overlooking his rice fields in Southern China and smiling gently, a little maliciously, when he remembers the svelte, chic Englishwoman who once held his heart in chains.

II

THE beginning of it all came about in a most natural manner. A bored, selfish, unscrupulous woman was seeking a new amusement. A Chinaman, homesick in a land he hated, among people whom he didn't understand, was lonely. And fate brought the two together.

The occasion was an Embassy Ball. Mrs. Warren was there, surrounded by a dozen admirers, her elfin beauty and characteristic air of rather insolent nonchalance making her stand out even in that assembly of extraordinary women. As she stood in a little cleared space in the centre of the great ballroom, smiling indolently at a compliment from a heavy, pompous Russian, she seemed to Tsue Kwong the materialization of a dream—a beautiful dream such as a boy has lying on the banks of the Great River and afterwards composes silly verses about in slurring Cantonese.

"Eyes thou hast which dazzle
Like jewels and the sparkling sunlight.
Thy lips are soft and red like petals
Of a crimson poppy. . . ."

That year, anything that was Chinese was the thing in London. Theatrical managers, modistes, milliners, interior decorators, restaurateurs,—all combined to pander to the taste for the far Oriental which for some unknown reason swept over the city. So when a kindly old diplomat, seeing the hunger for companionship in Tsue Kwong's slanting eyes, brought him forward and introduced him into Mrs. Warren's circle, she regarded him with interest.

"How amusing it would be," she thought, "to have a little Chinaman for one's own."

And looking down upon the adoring

Tsue Kwong, she knew instantly that she could have one for the asking.

Mrs. Warren was not the type of woman who considers consequences either to herself or to others. In point of fact, in her life there had never been consequences to herself to consider. From her convent school, she had gone to the home of an adoring husband who had let her gratify her every whim and safeguarded her. After he died, there had been others to protect her when unhappiness might have followed certain of her actions. As for the consequences to others . . . to consider what might be the consequences to Tsue Kwong, were she to add him to her collection of baubles, never occurred to her any more than it had occurred to her to consider the feelings of the Ming vase she had lately purchased for her boudoir. She had wanted the Ming vase and she bought it. She wanted Tsue Kwong and she took him. And that was all there was about it.

The days that followed that night of nights when Mrs. Warren was so gracious to him were days of ecstasy to Tsue Kwong. At the Chinese Embassy, where he held an unimportant post despite his wealth and the power of his father, his fellow clerks chaffed him for his absent-mindedness. He was living in a dream, but it was not in a dream of the Black Smoke such as his countrymen accused him of enjoying. Something far worse than opium drew the film of enchantment over his eyes—the smiles of a woman incapable of caring for anyone but herself yet capable of stimulating a caring in an adoring boy.

Tsue Kwong asked nothing but the privilege of adoring. There was little of sensuality in his make-up. Love to him was a mingling of the spirits of the lovers.

So his own nature made it easy for Mrs. Warren to bring him under her dominion without paying the price of even a caress from her delicate soft hands.

Mrs. Warren was proud of her latest acquisition to her collection of toys. She exploited him as a showman exploits a clever freak. By her will, he was at her side almost continually. And when he was not with her he was fetching and carrying for her, running errands here and there to gratify her whims which were as numerous as the sayings of the Almighty Buddha. As a queen of feudal days had her personal retainer, her own slave, so Mrs. Warren had hers. Because Tsue Kwong worshipped her, because he was grateful to her for having had pity upon him in his loneliness, he served her faithfully. He sought to make his tastes in all things conform to hers; to love whom he thought she loved; to hate whom she hated.

And of the latter their number was legion. If Mrs. Warren could not love, she could hate, and she exercised her faculty without stint. Whoever crossed her, whoever denied her rule, was her enemy. Clever though she was in most ways, in one particular she was a trifle stupid. She showed her dislikes too plainly, with the result that there were more than a few of her acquaintances who were watching for her to make the one misstep that would permit them to be down on her like a pack of starving wolves.

The leaders of the "opposition"—if those who hated Mrs. Warren may be dignified by the title—were three women: Lady Bartwell, Vi Sturgis, and the petite, feline Kitty Branscom, whose tongue held an edge like a Toledo blade's. They were clever women, all three. Although they hated, they kept their hatred hidden. They "deared" their enemy and invited her to their entertainments and went to hers. They spoke of her always as "the wonderful Louise."

But they were unable to deceive Tsue Kwong. Instinctively he knew when he was with them that he was with enemies of his beloved. But he, too, was clever. He smiled blandly into their searching eyes and bowed low over their unfriendly hands. And he ignored outwardly their obvious dislike

of him—a dislike bred of his intimacy with Mrs. Warren rather than by any qualities in himself.

However, it was none of the women who gave him his nickname. Larry Abbott, lounging in the club window one afternoon and seeing Mrs. Warren and Tsue Kwong drive by, coined the phrase that was taken up by all who knew them.

"There goes Mrs. Warren and the Dancing Dog," he said indolently.

"The Dancing Dog?" someone asked.

"Yes. Kwong, the Chinaman."

"But why Dancing Dog?"

Abbott turned, smiling whimsically.

"Have you never seen a performing dog and sort of pitied it? Sort of felt that by performing its antics it had lost its dignity somehow—become less of a dog? A dog should be a dog. And by the same token, a man—even a Chinaman—should be a man and not—well, not a dancing dog. When I see Tsue Kwong come to heel to that—er—woman, I feel the pity for him I feel for a dancing dog at the Palace or the Alhambra."

Such is the quality of the human mind that the nickname that is a little cruel because a little true is always the favoured. Thenceforth to everyone Tsue Kwong was the Dancing Dog.

It was inevitable that he should hear the name himself. He did hear it, and often. Some, even of those who liked him moderately, used it in his presence. But it caused him no unpleasant feelings. He missed its application entirely. His knowledge of English, though precise, took into account little more than the literal meanings of words or those secondary meanings in the commonest use. Dancing Dog meant to him a gay sort of fellow, a little careless, a little irresponsible. Maybe he was even a little proud of the name.

Mrs. Warren heard the name, too. It caused her no more annoyance than it did Tsue Kwong. But, unlike the Chinaman, she was not deceived about its meaning. One of her friends took care of that in short order. It amused her and at the same time fed her vanity. Its use was a public acknowledgment of her power over her victim, who, as the days went by, became more and more her slave. At least that was the way she considered it.

The season moved on briskly. The weather was charming. London was crowded, and dinners, dances, balls, theatre parties, etc., existed in profusion. Mrs. Warren went as perhaps she had never gone before. The Triflers that year outdid themselves in the fêtes they gave to honour the goddess of pleasure and Mrs. Warren, at the height of her popularity, led them madly through the mazes of their dance.

At the beginning Tsue Kwong kept pace with her. Because he was acknowledgedly her property, he, too, was asked everywhere. It would be stretching the truth to say that he enjoyed himself. Something in the nature which as a boy had made him yearn for the wisdom of Confucius revolted against the shallowness of this mad pursuit of happiness.

There were times when with a pain in his heart that was almost unbearable he recalled the quiet of his home, the gentle winds blowing across the rice fields, the monotonous, unending flow of the Great River. Then he would struggle with himself, subduing his longings, and go about more than ever, because going meant being near and with the woman whose slender fingers gripped his soul.

To a selfish woman a possession is of value and to be cherished only for so long as it amuses. Afterward it may be thrown into the dust heap and forgotten. And in proportion to her selfishness and shallowness is the shortness of the time that the amusing qualities of a toy endure. Mrs. Warren was very selfish and very shallow. So when other pleasures intervened and became more numerous, the pleasure she had taken in Tsue Kwong dwindled. Also there grew in her a slight contempt for the Chinaman who had let her make him her dancing dog.

Then began Tsue Kwong's suffer-

ing. It would seem that those capable of strong feeling are possessed of extraordinary intuitive powers. They sense change more often than they know it by virtue of observation and reason.

So it was with Tsue Kwong. He sensed the change in Mrs. Warren. Never had she given him anything real in affection or even in liking, but when she withdrew the counterfeit kindness with which she had fooled her Chinaman, the loss of it affected him as deeply, almost, as might the loss of something of greater value.

At first he was bewildered. He sought the cause of the change that hurt him in some fault in himself. He exerted himself to be more pleasing, going to extravagant lengths to please and to prove his devotion.

But it was no good—had he but known it. Mrs. Warren was to all intents and purposes through with him. Her interest was concentrated on a new fad—this time a new dance imported from the Argentine, and in her pursuit of it she could spare no time for a generous little Chinese who loved her.

III

It was on a warm spring afternoon at the height of the season that this first was borne in upon Tsue Kwong. An unusual amount of work at the Embassy had delayed him later than usual. When he reached Mrs. Warren's house to keep an appointment for five o'clock the clock on the dashboard of his car registered four-thirty. He ran up the steps and rang the bell, pushing hurriedly by the man when the door was opened and gaining access to the hall before the man had a chance to say to him what he had been told to say.

"I beg pardon, sir," the flunkey stammered, "but Mrs. Warren is not at 'ome."

"Not at home!" Tsue Kwong echoed blankly.

"No, sir. She went out 'arf an hour ago, sir."

Tsue Kwong turned dejectedly away. He had his hand on the handle of the door when a sound came from the drawing-room beyond which gave the lie to the servant's words. Mrs. Warren's unmistakable laugh rang out as clearly as the ringing of a silvery temple bell at dawn. Then there were voices.

"But, my dear Louise, you did go it a bit strong with the little Chinaman, you know."

Mrs. Warren replied:

"Oh, he amused me. But I'm tired of him now. I wish I didn't have to see him again. These Orientals are so extremely odd. They seem to expect one to take them seriously. As though one could take a Chinaman really seriously!"

She laughed again.

Then a third—this time a man's—voice broke in:

"Well, one could scarcely take the Dancing Dog seriously. Ridiculous little bounder."

Tsue Kwong did not wait to hear more.

Like a man suddenly gone blind he groped his way across the vestibule and down the short flight of steps to the pavement. Staggering a little, he entered the tonneau of his car and ordered the chauffeur to drive him to his rooms.

Once hidden behind the cool green blinds, his valet dismissed for the afternoon, Tsue Kwong's masklike expression—that expression as inscrutable as fate—the birthright of every Chinaman—gave place to something quite terrible to see. The rage and suffering which racked his whole being were reflected in the half-closed, glittering eyes, in the quivering nostrils, in the snarling tenseness of livid lips. He writhed in an agony of shame and self-abasement—a mortally wounded, fighting animal rather than a man.

The tempest passed. The reign of the emotions gave way to the sway of reason. The cold-blooded restraint which had been the weapon of his an-

cestors for a thousand years was returned to him. Once more he was Tsue Kwong—the Chinaman.

Yet not quite the same Tsue Kwong. The year or two he had spent in England, the months he had spent in close companionship with Mrs. Warren and her friends, in some ways so typical of the Western world, had had an effect upon him. A thin veneer of Occidentalism had spread over him as a cabinet-maker could spread an oak veneer over a body of teakwood. In many ways he had learned to think and feel as his companions thought and felt. He had become Anglicized—as Anglicized as an Oriental can ever become.

But all that was changed now. The English Tsue Kwong was gone, gone for ever—dead as completely as his fellow-countryman who lived ten thousand years before, and who, cursing his ancestors before the sacred Buddha, had rotted away before the eyes of his terror-stricken companions. The Tsue Kwong who sat motionless, expressionless, staring into nothingness, was all Chinese. And, like a Chinese who has been injured, laughed at—who has been made to lose face before an antagonistic world—Tsue Kwong was planning his revenge—a revenge subtle, lasting in its effects and leaving its instigator free from all blame and censure.

It was nightfall before the vital idea struck him. Then just the shadow of a smile crossed his face. He rose and rang for his valet.

"Soy Kee," he said gently, "you will go to the flower seller's and purchase three large bouquets of his rarest and costliest blossoms. And you will take them, one to each of the ladies whose names I have written for you on this slip of paper. And from each of these ladies you will beg the favour that she meet your master in the Carlton lounge to-morrow night just before the German Ambassador's dinner. Say that it is of the utmost importance that this request be complied with, for your master would make to each a communication of great consequence."

The valet bowed and withdrew. Tsue Kwong waited until the man had left the flat before he hurried into his evening clothes and took a taxi to his club for dinner.

IV

Lady Bartwell, Vi Sturgis, and Kitty Branscom were surprised to find each other in the Carlton lounge awaiting the coming of Tsue Kwong.

"What under the sun do you suppose the man wants of us?" Kitty Branscom asked.

"Heaven only knows," the Sturgis woman replied. "Perhaps he wants us to help him fix it up with Louise Warren. I hear that she has practically chucked him."

"Fancy asking us to help him," laughed Lady Bartwell, and the others echoed her amusement.

"It doesn't seem quite fair, though," said Lady Bartwell, "for Louise to turn the poor little man down so quite coldbloodedly. He has been *so* devoted."

Which, in consideration of the "Triflers'" code, was more nearly an expression of antagonism toward Louise Warren than any one of the three had ever permitted herself.

"Dear Louise has always been able to eat her cake and have it too," murmured Kitty Branscom, and added discontentedly: "There seems to be no way—"

She was interrupted by Vi Sturgis, in whose deep-set eyes the smouldering gleam of hatred had for an instant leaped to flame. "Some day—"

"Sh!"

Tsue Kwong had entered the room.

He was exceedingly bland. In his round face there was not a trace of guile. Only when he began to speak was any emotion evident in his bearing. And that emotion was seemingly caused by a slight embarrassment such as a child might evince coming before his elders to ask a favour. He bowed very low.

"It is exceedingly gracious of you to comply with my request," he said, addressing the trio in his stilted English, "and I would not have made it had I

not felt that the circumstances warranted it."

He paused and glanced somewhat appealingly at the three women. None of them spoke, but each eyed him with unconcealed interest.

"I know," he went on, "that you, like myself, dislike gossip—that crawling, loathsome thing that seeks its victim in the dark. Perhaps you have even suffered from it. If so, you will be the more willing to grant the request which I am about to make to you. For I am going to ask you to join with me in putting a stop to a little gossip which might greatly injure one whom you cherish as a friend. I mean Mrs. Warren. I want to beg of you to promise me that no matter where you hear it and no matter from whom you hear it, you will deny absolutely *the story that Mrs. Warren and my humble self have been anything more than friends—just friends, you understand?*"

The three women were staring at him in amazement. In their surprise at his words, they were powerless to speak. He smiled at them. Then he spoke again.

"I can see from your expressions that you are as incensed as I that gossip should have attacked our mutual friend. I know without your promising me that you will grant my request. Thank you, and—good-night."

Tsue Kwong again bowed low—and was gone.

Vi Sturgis was the first to recover herself.

"The drivelling idiot!" she exclaimed.

Lady Bartwell's lip curled. "Louise—and a *Chinaman!*" She shrugged.

The two turned toward Kitty Branscom, who met their eyes with a curiously significant smile. "Of course," she said, "we will deny it."

A gleam of understanding flashed into the eyes of Vi Sturgis—was duplicated for the fraction of a second in those of Lady Bartwell, and was gone.

"Of course," echoed Vi. "We will deny it."

"To everyone," drawled Lady Bartwell.

The three women smiled into one another's eyes as they rose and left the room.

I SHALL REMEMBER

By Louise Foley Finerty

I SHALL remember
When you are gone,
A sky full of stars
And a gray windy dawn.

Nevermore lonely
Shall I go then,
Though you may forget
And come not again.

Silent or singing,
My heart shall hold
A dream of silver,
A vision of gold.

HER HONEYMOON

By Solita Solano

I

HAL, who had had two bottles of wine at luncheon, told Cynthia a joke he had read in *Punch* that morning. Cynthia smiled faintly and looked over the rail at the porpoises.

"Don't you get the point?" asked Hal. "The Scotchman didn't want to spend his money. The Scotch are noted for being stingy, you know."

"Yes, I know," replied Cynthia in a low voice.

"Well, why didn't you laugh, then?" demanded Hal. "I guess it's true that women have no sense of humour."

Cynthia did not answer. Her eyes fell to the fourth finger of her left hand on which only the day before Hal had slipped a shining gold band.

"Oh, well, let's sit down," said Hal.

They walked to their steamer chairs. He spread rugs over their feet and yawned prodigiously.

"This air makes you sleepy, eh?" he said through his yawn.

"Why don't you take a nap? Do, dear. Just for an hour," suggested Cynthia.

"Perhaps I will."

Hal's eyes closed and presently he was breathing regularly, if a bit heavily.

Cynthia bent gently toward him and studied his unconscious face. How handsome he was! She noted for the hundredth time since meeting him three weeks ago how thickly and becomingly his hair grew on his forehead; the beautiful line of his eyebrows; how beyond reproach was his slightly aquiline nose; how firmly chiselled were his mouth and chin, refuting any accusation of effeminacy that might have been called forth by the long eyelashes and shapely brows.

How wonderful to feel that at last she had found the ideal of her girlhood dreams and that he was hers for ever!

Cynthia sighed rapturously and, reaching across the space between the chairs, slid her hand into Hal's. Her happiness seemed complete. Her honeymoon to Buenos Ayres would be a beautiful dream of summer seas, strange and enchanting lands, perfect companionship and the love she had been waiting for all her life.

Cynthia was impatient for Hal to awaken. There was so much to say—so many thoughts and dreams to exchange. She wanted to know her hero better. Their courtship had been so brief after their first week together at a house party that there had been no time to give those thousand foolish confidences that lovers exchange by the hour before marriage—and forget, almost at once, afterward.

But Hal slept on heavily through the afternoon and only woke in time to dress for dinner.

"Guess I'll go and get a bracer, honey," he said, after he had dressed almost in silence. "Come along when you're ready." He yawned and left the room.

"Poor Hal, he must be tired out after those two bachelor dinners," Cynthia told herself. She felt disappointed and just a trifle chilled as she went into the dining-saloon.

Hal had evidently taken his "bracer." He was in high spirits. He ordered a bottle of heavy red wine and told the

captain the joke about the Scotchman. The captain laughed politely, and Hal, encouraged, raised his voice to include a larger audience. The farces he had seen that season on Broadway became his topic. He touched upon them all in a general way and then related the details of an exceptionally dull American-made comedy to which he had taken Cynthia the week before. His audience was obviously bored.

"They say French farces are the best, but this 'Three Beds, Two Doors and a Window' was as funny as any I ever saw from Paris. Wasn't it, Cynthia?"

His face was flushed and Cynthia saw that a second bottle of the wine had been opened for him.

"I haven't seen many farces," answered Cynthia. She felt her face crimsoning.

"Another funny one was where a girl had been a model and the painter fellow had kept the picture of her and after she was married—"

"Captain, when do we begin to have really warm weather?" interrupted Cynthia, hoping to avoid further details of this ancient plot.

Everyone seized the opportunity to resume conversation. Hal looked gloomy, and devoted himself to the newly uncorked bottle. He listened to Cynthia and the captain discussing South America.

"I bought a Spanish primer," she said. "I've learned the first three lessons. I'm going to study every day. An hour after each meal—like a pill." She laughed.

Hal leaned across the table leeringly and said something to her in a thick voice. Then he chuckled and reached for his glass.

There was a dead silence. The woman next to Hal caught her breath. Everyone began to talk nervously. Cynthia sat through dessert without speaking. She was drenched in shame. After dinner she went to her cabin. A horrible doubt had entered her heart. When Hal came in she made no attempt to conceal her tears.

"What's the matter?" he asked, drawing her clumsily to him.

Cynthia told him.

"Why, they all know we're just married. What was the harm? You've got to be a woman of the world now," he said, swaying a little.

"Perhaps I'm too sensitive," thought Cynthia, trying to excuse Hal but feeling in her heart that he had been outrageously vulgar.

And she lay awake half the night listening to his heavy breathing and trying to readjust her dreams to realities.

II

CYNTHIA had been walking the deck for an hour before Hal appeared, looking stupid with sleep and distinctly out of sorts. Evidently he had dressed in haste. There was talcum powder on his cheek and his necktie was awry.

"Hullo," he greeted her. "Where did you disappear to? I never heard a sound. You had your coffee, didn't you? I daresay it's too late for me to get anything now."

"I daresay," replied Cynthia.

"My mother has always said I should have coffee as soon as I get up or I will have a headache all day," Hal went on fretfully, his brows drawn together.

"Luncheon will be ready soon," said Cynthia. "I have had nothing either. I had forgotten about breakfast in this glorious air."

They strolled about the deck arm in arm.

The bright day restored Hal's good humour somewhat. His manner became more sentimental. He pressed her hand and asked her to forgive his unfortunate remark of the night before. Cynthia, delighted again to place her idol on his pedestal, forgave him with her sweetest smile.

Drawing him into the corner, she pulled his tie straight.

"No one is looking. Kiss me," said Hal, suddenly. The stale odour of cigarettes assailed her nostrils.

"No—no. Someone might see," said Cynthia, nervously.

"Come here!" He took her arm and pulled her to him.

"Kiss me," he commanded.

"No," gasped Cynthia.

Hal held her firmly and turned her face to his. For a long minute he held her so. Cynthia felt a queer rage possess her. It seemed to her as if a strange man had defiled her lips. She pushed him away and would even have struck him in the face had she been sure there was no one to see.

"You little wild-cat!" exclaimed Hal. "It's time you had a master. Every woman needs one to complete her development. You'll grow to like it." And he laughed as one who has had a triumph.

Cynthia could not speak. She tucked a strand of shining hair into her white hat and pressed her lips together to stop their trembling. The eyes she turned on Hal were hard and bright.

"I don't understand," she said at last. "Are you serious? What kind of women have you known before me, Hal?"

"I've known all kinds. They're mostly alike." Hal smiled as if at a memory.

"And did they all complete their development with you as a master?"

"Let's go down to luncheon," said Hal.

They descended to the saloon in silence.

"How's the Spanish to-day? Can I help you?" asked the captain.

"I tell my wife she should learn how to order her food before she studies anything fancy," Hal put in. "That's the most important thing, isn't it, Captain?"

"Some people learn that first—and others learn to say, 'I love you,'" answered the captain, smiling.

Cynthia's intuition told her that he would be willing to take advantage of the lack of harmony he had sensed between her and Hal. She could not control the colour that rushed to her cheeks. She hoped Hal would come to her rescue with some graceful banter. But he was pouring out the heavy red wine he drank with every meal.

"The sea air always gives one a good appetite, *n'est-ce pas?*" Hal pronounced it "nessy pas" and cast the words at Cynthia triumphantly as he gulped down the wine.

"If you know a bit of French you can get along anywhere," he continued complacently. "What's the use wasting time on a lot of languages? With English and French to tell the waiters what you want you can travel anywhere in the world."

"Haven't you heard that each new language opens the door of a new world?" asked the captain.

He spoke to Hal but looked at Cynthia.

"English is good enough for me," returned Hal, bluntly.

III

CYNTHIA had a headache that afternoon. By dinner time it was worse.

"I'll send you in something," said Hal.

He took a flask from his bag and poured out a stiff drink.

"Oh, Hal, I hate the smell of that," protested Cynthia, feebly. "I never knew you liked to—" She stopped.

"Liked to what?" inquired Hal.

"Nothing, dear. I'll sleep till you come back. I don't want any dinner."

When, some time later, Hal returned, Cynthia saw he had had his usual two bottles of the wine. He yawned, inquired about her headache, and lit a cigarette. He smoked it, and then fitted another in his holder.

"Are you going to smoke in bed, Hal?" she asked.

"Uh-huh. I always do," he answered.

He lay down and fell asleep almost immediately, the smoking cigarette between his fingers. Cynthia took it from his relaxed hand and flung it from the porthole. She turned on the electric fan to drive out the odour, and sprinkled cologne water about the cabin.

In the morning when she awoke smoke was again in Cynthia's nostrils. Hal was walking about whistling faintly. Cynthia suddenly felt an uncon-

trollable rebellion against having the will of another person forced upon her.

"Hal, cigarettes make me ill in the morning," she said. "Can't you wait till you go on deck to smoke?"

"You talk like the Anti-Tobacco League," returned Hal. "You smoke, don't you?"

"Not in the room where I sleep—and not continuously like a chimney."

Hal did not reply. He moved about the room, glancing from side to side.

"Do you know where my watch is?" he asked. "I always put it under my pillow after I wind it."

He was searching among Cynthia's things now, poking under garments and even shaking her slippers.

Cynthia felt her temper rising and tried to control her nerves.

"I'll look for it when I get up, Hal. *Please* don't disturb my things."

Hal, tousled and unshaven, seemed not to hear. He continued to shake out lingerie, veils and blouses.

"Hal, let my things alone!" Cynthia could no longer keep the anger from her voice.

"I must find my watch," he insisted. "By Jove, here it is—on the floor. And I've forgotten to wind it for two nights."

He laughed, his good humour restored. His eyes began to twinkle.

"Here's a funny story I heard in the smoking room, Cynthia, about a drummer who forgot to wind his watch. I couldn't have told it to you a few days ago, but now we're married I suppose it's all right."

And he related a trite story, the humour of which lay in its vulgarity. When he finished he laughed heartily.

Cynthia, who had never heard such a story before, wondered how Hal could have thought she would be amused by this story of smoking room origin. She knew that he was waiting for her to laugh. She tried to smile, but her jangling nerves made her sob instead.

"I'm going to sleep for another hour," she said, and buried her face in the pillow.

"Why do women never have a sense of humour?" Hal flung the question at her like a challenge. From his tone she knew he had been stung. Presently from the bathroom came sounds of splashing and the chorus of "Smiles." Then five resounding sneezes.

A cross and untidy Hal, whose ears were red and shining from his bath, returned to the cabin and began to lather his face and test the edge of his razor. He was one of the men who so frequently boast, "I never let a barber touch my face—always shave myself."

The lather well rubbed into his skin, Hal spread his feet far apart and grasped the razor firmly. Pulling the skin taut over the cheekbone, he closed one eye and began to draw the blade over his face with small, quick motions.

Cynthia watched this morning rite as if hypnotized. It was the first day Hal had shaved in her presence. As she watched him he gasped, threw back his head and sneezed. One, two, three, four, five times. Cynthia winced. Hal resumed his shaving.

That afternoon Cynthia and Hal watched the flashing sun lower itself into the sea.

"I've been thinking, Hal, that I know you less than I did before we were married," Cynthia remarked.

"Meaning you're disillusioned?" Hal smiled indifferently, his gaze on the horizon.

Cynthia thought how eagerly his eyes used to meet hers during their courtship.

"I mean, Hal, that I know nothing about the real you. Until this week all I knew was where you liked to have luncheon and dinner, what plays you wanted to see, and which baseball team you hoped would win the pennant. But I thought I knew you very well. Now I realize I don't know anything about you and that you probably only married me because it was time to settle down and I was as satisfactory a girl as any you knew at the time." Cynthia gave a little sob.

"You girls are certainly full of moonshine and nonsense, aren't you?" retorted Hal, chaffingly. "You want a

man to recite poetry to you and say pretty things from morning till night. Well, I don't go in for that sort of mush."

His eyes wandered to the steward's steaming cups of tea and chocolate. Cynthia bit her lips and resolved to stop her tears from flowing.

"Do you want your tea, Hal?" she asked.

He turned to her. Perhaps he would say, "How can I think of tea when you are suffering!" or he might merely exclaim, "Tea!" in a tone of contempt.

"I'll tuck you in your chair and send you the steward. I'm going to the smoking-room," he said coolly.

Cynthia's lip quivered. She looked away.

"Very well," she said, stiffly. "I'll lie down, I think."

She left him abruptly and went to her cabin. Hoping in spite of herself for the sound of his footsteps, she stood for a quarter of an hour, waiting. Then she began to dress, slowly and deliberately.

When Hal came down nearly two hours later she was in a black evening gown, shining hair piled high and a cool, meditative look in her eyes.

"Hello, honey," he said in a careless voice. Cynthia did not like to be called "honey." Hal began to whistle "Madelon" as he undressed. He walked about in one garment and without slippers. He put the buttons in his shirt to the tune of "Over There." He brushed his hair to "Pretty Baby," and Cynthia saw several hairs fall from the thin spot on top of his head. Then he sneezed—three times.

Cynthia's nerves gave way.

"Hal, I must speak to you," she said, sharply. She began to tremble.

"Yes, honey, what is it now?"

Cynthia knew her tone had annoyed him. She could not answer. Her teeth were chattering. She dug her nails into her palms.

"Do you want to talk about your soul or my cigarettes?" Hal asked.

"It's—it's everything," she said in a muffled voice.

There was a silence.

He finished dressing and walked to the door.

"Women make me tired," he burst forth. "You're all alike."

With a gesture that repudiated the room and all it contained he slammed the door behind him.

Cynthia wrapped a silk cape about her and went on deck. It was an evening of soft, green light from a waning moon and a sea alive with phosphorus. By the time she had walked twice around the deck her heart was empty of bitterness. She looked through the door of the smoking-room filled with men and women sitting before their apéritifs. Hal was at a table with the captain and the Winslows, a young married couple whom Cynthia knew slightly.

Filled with the desire to forgive and be forgiven, she entered and stood by Hal's side. The captain saw her first. He arose and greeted her with a touch of ardour. She smiled into his eyes, welcoming an attention which helped to restore her wounded self-respect. She turned her eyes to Hal's and as he rose she saw he wore an indignant expression.

"Hal, please order me a bit of caviare and a tiny glass of something," she begged, smiling brightly at him.

Hal called the steward and then poured out a preposterous drink of strong spirits from the bottle that stood at his elbow.

Presently he was holding forth to the table, telling of fortunes lost in an hour in Wall Street and saying that women should be kept from gambling there.

"They're irresponsible and need men to handle these things for them," he said. "A master is what they all need—to take the nonsense out of them."

Cynthia tried to meet this like a thoroughbred. She looked about the table and laughed.

"We women don't like to have our pedestals vacant," she said, and turned to the captain.

"Will you take me up to the bridge

after dinner and show me how you run your ship?"

"Nothing would give me more pleasure," he replied.

IV

CYNTHIA was asleep that night when Hal came down. She did not awake until morning. The air was already pungent with smoke. Hal was shaving. He heard Cynthia move.

"Good morning. I hope you slept well," he said, curtly.

"Thanks, and you?" she answered, mechanically.

"Very well, thank you."

"I didn't hear you come down last night."

"No?"

"Why are you cross, Hal?"

"Cross? I?" he replied, indistinctly.

One corner of his mouth was drawn down. He released it to wipe the lather from the razor.

"Well, to tell you the truth, any man would be likely to feel put out if his wife flirted on her honeymoon."

He pulled down the other cheek and squinted into the mirror. The scraping sounds recommenced.

"Hal! That's insulting. I won't allow you to say such a thing to me." She sat up, flushing with anger.

"I'll say anything to you I damn please," he replied.

He finished shaving in leisurely fashion. He smoked another cigarette and whistled "Dardanella." Cynthia lay with tense muscles. When he was ready for the deck he went over to her.

"Perhaps you didn't mean to flirt but it looked like it to me," he said, and held out his hand.

Cynthia felt lonely. She took his fingers in hers. He bent down and kissed her. She smelled the mingled odours of nicotine and his unpleasant peppermint toothpaste. After he had gone she lay staring at the ceiling.

"Perhaps children make a difference," she thought a bit later, as she was dressing.

"Hal, I want to ask you something," she ventured that evening from her deck-chair.

"Uh-huh."

"Oh, I'm sorry. Were you asleep?"

"No, no." He roused himself and cleared his throat.

"What did you say?"

"I wanted to ask you something. Do you like children?"

"Can't say I do much. They make a lot of noise and tie people down. I say, you're not thinking already—"

"Oh, no. I just wondered if you—" Cynthia's voice trailed away.

"If I what?"

"Nothing, Hal. Only I know you so little. I was thinking of what Ibsen's Nora said about having lived with a strange man. Sometimes I feel that way about you—".

"You're sorry you married me. Is that it?" Hal rapped out.

Cynthia knew his vanity had been pierced. She chose quickly.

"Of course I'm not sorry," she said.

Hal, mollified, grunted. Presently his head dropped forward and he dozed again. Cynthia watched the blinking stars and pondered on the mystery of matter and the futility of all mortal things.

At midnight Hal awoke and stretched himself.

"Ready for bed?"

"Yes, Hal."

"We get in to-morrow, you know."

"Yes, Hal."

They folded their rugs. Hal, half asleep, stumbled over Cynthia's foot.

They went below.

"Sometimes I would rather have a rendyvoo with a bed than with a woman," he remarked.

He yawned and lit a cigarette.

"Yes, Hal."

The morning was charged with excitement. Everyone was on deck soon after sunrise. Stewards bustled about, their hopes of a rich harvest already beginning to be realized.

Cynthia, having breakfasted and attended to her luggage, sat near the rail watching the land come nearer and nearer. Slim and straight, her blue

tailored suit and simple hat gave her an air of aloof smartness.

Hal joined her presently. He sat in moody silence.

"You forgot this, sir," said a steward at his elbow, holding out a gold cigarette case. "I found it in your room."

"Thanks. Wait a minute," said Hal.

From his pocket he brought forth a change purse of soft leather. Cynthia saw the purse and looked at Hal as he carefully extracted from it a fifty-cent piece and handed it to the man. She waited for Hal to explain the purse. She had never seen a man carry one before.

Hal did not look at her. He carefully replaced the purse in his pocket and stared out at the water. For the first time Cynthia noticed the faint lines about his eyes and mouth and the fullness about the jowls that indicated he had lived according to the dictates of the flesh. As she looked at him, she thought he seemed quite unfamiliar. She could think of half a dozen men of her acquaintance whom she knew better.

Hal appeared unconscious of her gaze or even her presence. His silence and expression of contempt seemed premeditated. She returned her gaze to the beauty of the coastline.

And thus they sailed into the harbour of Cynthia's illusions.

NOCTURNE IN JUNE

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

THE night is astir with dreams—
From branches swayed in the breeze
The white moths flutter out
Through shadows of the trees.

A young girl's dress is blown
Where shadows shift and stir
Along the restless grass,
And no one walks with her.

All still, a part of gloom,
An old house takes the breeze,
And, on the porch, old heads
Start nodding with the trees.

Slowly the girl moves back
To the porch, and finds a chair,
And fingers, with night-deep eyes,
The ribbon in her hair.

Her mother stirs and wakes.
The girl, with head half-hung,
Says, "Mother, tell me about
When father and you were young."

THE QUEEN FORGETS

By George Sterling

WHAT came before and afterward
(She said) I do not know;
But I remember well a night
In a life long ago.

What spoil was I of Egypt sacked?
Of what old war the pledge?
Around my tent whose army lay,
At the great desert's edge?

A maiden, or a Satrap's wife,
A slave or queen was I
Who saw that night the steady stars
Go down the living sky?—

And saw against the heavenly ranks
How one stood watch and ward.
Black on the stars he stood, and leaned
On a cross-hilted sword.

There was no sound in all the camp
But when a stallion neighed. . . .
I saw the light of Sirius
On the cold blade.

Downward, above a single palm,
Slowly the great star crept;
More motionless my sentry stood,
As silently I wept.

What wrath had Libya for my loss?
In Syria what tears?
What king or swineherd cursed his god
In those forgotten years?

The tale is not in tapestry;
The gray monks do not know. . . .
Only its shadow touches me
From out the long ago.

Of terror and of tenderness
Is that far vigil made
And the green light of Sirius
On the chill blade.

REALITY

By Helen Louise Wolcott

I

HE sat mooning happily over his dinner. He liked to be alone, for he had just enough stimulus for thought in the resources of his own mind—just enough and not too much, for it must be confessed that he didn't wish to reason and speculate too deeply.

To-night he was contented in his own dear pleasant way. He had a *filet* cooked just to suit him, the orchestra was playing a waltz which softly stirred his senses, the coffee perked up his mood tantalizingly, and besides, he could congratulate himself that he was in love.

Yes, he was profoundly in love; not quite madly enamoured, because he was of too sanguine a temperament for that, but at least irrevocably enamoured. And she was poor, too, which showed the reality of his infatuation. After marriage he would have to share his little comfortable income with her, and perhaps deny himself little extravagances like summer trips with the best obtainable service; and the highest priced silk shirts; and the finest hotel suites.

Oh, well, if one was a poet and romantic one must suffer. He had a secret, unuttered idea that he was a poet, although he had never written verses. True, however, he had written numerous articles and they had been accepted too.

He thought lazily of these matters, and sundry other matters, as he ate. He had a sure digestion, an aristocratic bearing, perfect taste in dress, an agile mind, a deal of originality, and a contented temperament. And then could anyone say that the gods had not smiled on him; were not smiling as he cut his *filet?* And the godly smile must have been benign, comprehensive, tolerant, also—a very different smile from the satirical one bestowed on some struggling mortals.

The waiter brought his salad. It was a good salad, and he had stipulated for lots of mayonnaise, for there were two relishes which he particularly favoured: lots of cream in his coffee and lots of mayonnaise.

He sipped the golden brown stuff with pleasure and began on the salad, but the rich *filet* had taken his appetite, and the pleasures of gustation were mostly over. Never mind, there were other happinesses.

He looked around a bit pityingly on the other more poorly-endowed mortals, who actually didn't possess his resources of mind. So many of the crowd appeared bored and falsely gay or admittedly glum.

He cancelled his dessert order, got his check, and paid his bill with the addition of a lavish tip. Then he walked out of the sumptuous dining-room, conscious that he looked successful and intelligent and very well-poised.

Now for the real gladness—his romance—his real romance. He was more than satisfied with himself for being in love as intensely as he was, for he would have hated to have had to admit to his own consciousness that he was incapable of any compelling emotion.

From all this it may be seen that he was his own best friend, and that he was very introspective, and sometimes the least bit pharisaical.

His car was parked about a block down the street, and he walked toward it briskly, his blood atingle from excellent food and high expectation. His nerves were just about as stiffened and just about as relaxed as they should have been for the best enjoyment.

As he steered the machine through the crowded districts, the hordes of pedestrians bothered him a little, but not much, and the lights and the shop windows and the air and the thrill of the city compensated. As he guided the wheel he made up a little poem about the whirl of the city square. It was a cubist poem, consisting of impression and vague shivering ecstasy of mood rather than definitely thought-out words. From this it may be deduced that he was more artistic than reasoning. As he drove out farther into the residential districts he composed another sort of ode on the cozy lights inside the cozy houses of the good world.

By this time he was before Irene's apartment-house—the apartment-house where she had the ugly rooms with her pinched-nose Aunt. He parked the machine, rang the buzzer, and ran up the mahogany stairway.

II

IRENE herself opened the door and let him in.

He rejoiced again that the thrill she gave him was renewed and reinforced every time that he came. He had been the victim of certain affairs which had dwindled down to next to nothing before—generally in two or three months—and he was always feeling afraid and insecure. But at last he believed that there was no such fear to be experienced with Irene. He was in love, irrevocably and eternally. She had on the blue taffeta dress with the grayish sleeves and trimmings which he liked especially. She was slim and white and proud and full of suppressed emotion, and she was the one girl he had ever seen who had atmosphere: real atmosphere: suggestion: a true appeal to the imagination. He could fancy her in a Queen's court, or among the angels in Heaven, or gracing the star part of a drama.

She was a music teacher, and to her he was all that she had longed to be herself. She envied his easy, nimble thinking, his ready repartee, his *savoir-faire* and his familiarity with all the polished luxuries which had been denied in her life. In her sincerity she saw no unconscious superficiality in his artistic, sensuous, quick-moving mind. She admired him blindly, wholeheartedly, and her devotion was absolute.

He took off his overcoat briskly.

"Is your Aunt out?" he asked. That woman offended his sensibilities woefully.

"Yes," she said, "I saw to that."

He kissed her impulsively. She was inspiring, awakening to his imagination. She warmed his already warm and softly-smouldering sense of the goodness of the universe.

She walked in before him to the little drawing-room (such they called it) and he liked the way she walked; and he noticed for the hundredth time her slender ankles and the trim gray slippers. Then there was the way she held her head and the way she proudly tilted it back when she talked; and the whiteness of her forehead and the grace of her hands. He was a lucky man.

"It's surely good to have you alone," he told her, making himself comfortable and looking around with enjoyment. "Your Dad out, too?"

"Yes—they went to a movie." She didn't explain that they both went out to avoid him—they were, perhaps, just a trifle in awe of him.

He came and bent over her, taking in all of her attractive appeal. What he liked, he liked intensely, and he never denied himself anything, so his satisfaction was always ebullient and demonstrative.

He liked to have her equally thrilled, too, and he was jealous if she seemed dull or even calm. Since her temperament was more reserved than his, this was often somewhat of an exaction. But she was accustomed to exactions in

life, exactions in work and discipline, and exactions in human intercourse. For aunts aren't mothers, and she had had little money and big ambitions, and big desires for fine things.

"Good enough that they aren't around here," he exulted. "Sorry I can't get along better with them, but hang it all—I just can't. Say, when we're married we'll ditch the auntie with the sharp nose, won't we now?"

She rose nervously, as though to stop him. "Oh, don't get started on anything to-night, please. I've taught all day, and I'm so tired, and I don't like to argue. I'll have to be kind to Aunt Linda, because she's always been kind to me."

He went over to the piano and ran his fingers over the keys. He could play ragtime by ear.

"She's such a bore," he said.

Something flamed in her brain, and made her say reckless things—perhaps it was the fatigue which caused the outburst, because she seldom indulged in explosions.

"We're not like you—any of us!" she exclaimed to his amazement. "We don't live as you do, and you don't like us, and you can't adapt yourself to us. You think you're richer and more—"

She stopped suddenly, blinded by silly tears, and pretended to look out of the window, although she could see nothing.

As he looked around at her, too startled to speak or even move, the thought came to him that she was more than just lovable—she was interesting and exciting and she had spirit. He was a lucky man. He felt a contrition, too, which was novel to him, and made him glow with a new sensation.

He was at her side, comforting her, assuring her, and vowing more consideration. Only he noticed that she wasn't as changeable and pliable as most of the women whom he had known, and he could see that there was more sensitiveness in her than in most. He could admire and adore her all the more, then.

"You're too good for me; much too good," he told her ardently. "But I'll make you happy in the end, I swear it."

After that things went along peacefully. Nothing more was said about certain unlucky actualities which had annoyed his sensibility. These actualities were mainly relatives and her aunt and the furnishings of the tiny drawing-room where they were.

At his request all except two of the pictures had been taken from the walls as lacking in taste, and the rose hangings had been lifted from the windows as too brilliant in hue, leaving the general effect one of unstately bleakness. She had often expressed a longing to get out and see the world—his world. She had an almost childish craving for the opera and plays and good music. They had gone sometimes, but that world was a little stale for him, and she was his new delight, so that he preferred being in this rather ugly apartment where he could have her all to himself. So he pleaded fatigue. Fatigue! When his business was his own and he was perfectly independent to idle away all of the time that he pleased since he had trusty managers, provided by a wise and far-seeing father. A father who had secretly been humiliated at the idea of certain characteristics which his son had exhibited in early years.

And so her longing for the play of life and the amusement and the pleasure went unsatisfied for the main part. At first she had not cared, for she had been very much in love, too, and it was enough just to have him with her—for had he not moved in fashionable and cultured circles, and had he not travelled and learned? But lately there had crept in little selfish demands and impatiences of his which had revealed the fact that he had been spoiled and petted and pampered a great deal. Well, she was willing to pamper him too. She could do that much if she loved him, for he was basically considerate.

The rest of the evening was going well, until unluckily the subject of religion came up.

"After we're married we'll ditch all this organ playing in the church, won't we? I hate the idea of church and all that stuff—church is so old-fashioned."

"But I do like to play the organ," she demurred.

"Come now, dear, for me!"

It was the usual phrase. Everything must be changed, then, for him. She must change her religious ideas, her relatives, the house, her tastes, her inclinations.

As she thought about it all, an inevitable question occurred to her more forcefully than ever. Did he really care? Or was he just a spoiled, selfish egoist?

The little room oppressed her. He could have taken her out some place to-night; for two evenings now they had just been cooped up here, because he was tired of downtown and the lights and the noise.

"So it's religion you want different, is it?" she asked, with a new note of irony in her voice. "Well, I'm getting tired of not being as I should be. Don't you think I have any pride? I'm not going on any longer with this—with this farce."

She had been sitting with a magazine on her knees. They had been looking at the photographs of prominent actresses. Now she flung the magazine away and rose.

"I don't want to see you any more—ever!" Her head was tilted back in the way that was hers when she was excited. Her face was always white, but now he imagined that it was whiter.

"Don't be theatrical," he warned her. He surely didn't understand her to-night. He had never thought of her as the explosive type.

Suddenly the sickening thought that there was nothing in him to reach—no kindliness, no sympathetic comprehension—maddened her. He was superficial, a trifler. What had she ever seen in him anyway?

"Please go—it's over."

"Over. What on earth do you mean?"

There were weary explanations and statements on her part, but he didn't understand. But finally he was gone.

She was trembling visibly as he shut the door of the hall. She had cared. He had been her romance—her real man of romance from a station of wealth and society which she had never hoped to enter. She hurried back into her tiny bedroom and lay sobbing on the bed in the darkness.

III

AWAY through the night his car glided smoothly. Nerves! Women's nerves! She would be repentant in the morning. And he would have his own way for weeks on account of her little explosion. He knew women. They were all like that: changeable, childish, proud by fits and starts. Well, he was so glad that she had spirit, and gad, he loved her all the more!

He wheeled up to a vaudeville show and went in. He enjoyed the lilt of the rhythmic music, and he sat and dreamed of the vim and zest of life and the vim and zest of her. He made up a little vague poem again, this time about women with tantalizing tempers and temperamental unexpectednesses. He thought of Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew," and he wondered if some such affair had inspired the famous bard.

He recalled to his mind the whiteness of her face as she had stood there fired with indignation. How she had tilted back her head in that way he liked. He'd make her angry often so that he could see that turn of the head. He remembered her slender ankles and the trim gray slippers and the graceful frock with gray sleeves and trimmings. He was certainly in love, and after they were married, why, he'd share his income with her, and maybe work harder in that fool uninteresting business so as to get more money for her. He was glad he was big enough to love unselfishly like that, for so many fellows were regular egoists nowadays.

He fell to speculating about the psychology of vaudeville after that, and he decided that the reason for it was that

people demanded sensuous rhythm and cleverness. Well, he had a sort of cosmic rhythm from the enjoyment of Irene. She surely had atmosphere. "Cosmic rhythm"—it was a good phrase. He repeated it over in his mind. "Cosmic rhythm." He composed another little poem about the cosmic rhythm of the love of a good woman. For she was good—was Irene—and he had always been forced to be good with her, because she would never have countenanced anything else. That necessity of being good had increased her charm a hundred-fold for him, too, for he was fastidious and he felt better and nobler when he was good.

Just then an icy feeling crept on him unbidden. What if she wouldn't make up? But women always made up. Besides, he was rich and she was poor, and the child was dazzled by his affluence—she had always been under the weight of poverty. No, she'd make up. Only give her a little time to think. Don't rush her. He'd managed such little affairs before.

After the show he went to a restaurant, where he sipped some more golden coffee and had some dainty sandwiches and dreamed indefinite dreams about the stir in living. They were colourful dreams and he was very fastidious about all of the appointments. Sometimes he was in a blue room—blue and gold—with white ivory wainscoting; sometimes he was in a woodsy place alone with Irene and her "cosmic rhythm"; sometimes he was by a lake with her, alone, and she held up her head proudly and her skin was white.

He wanted to call her up the next morning, but reason told him not to. She would be more alarmed and contrite by afternoon. He would ask her to go to a matinée if she didn't have too many lessons to give, and that would please her. She had a naïve longing for plays and operas and all those city pleasures which real city people so often outgrew. But she hadn't been city bred.

At promptly half-past twelve o'clock he telephoned to her.

"Dear," he began, "I'm so very sorry about the misunderstanding last night. All my fault. Been worried ever since."

Her voice cut in on his enthusiastic apologies with a new note in the tone.

"It's all right; I feel much better, now that it's all over. Don't worry about me. It was inevitable."

He felt almost physically dizzy, as he sat with the receiver clenched tight in his hand. It was over. She was different from other girls. She had spirit to spare—too much spirit.

"You don't care then?" he almost whined.

"That isn't the question." It was decided and cool.

Irene cool to him! His dizziness increased. There were a thousand things he wanted to say.

"Let me come and talk it over."

"No; it would do no good; it's better not to prolong disagreeable arguments."

Her voice was final—already worlds away from the dear understanding of him which he had luxuriated in. He sat very still—almost horrified at this trick which fate had dared to play on him. How could he be expected to live any more?

His first thought was suicide. Then he grew angry at her. If she had loved him enough it would have been all right; if she had only loved him as much as he loved her. If she had only felt the "cosmic rhythm" for him. But she was not a poet and she couldn't be expected to be as loyal as poets.

Should he go to her apartment and talk it over, contrary to her wishes? But something—some little intuition—told him that she was different from most girls, and that she had the strange and rare faculty of making up her mind and sticking to it. His romance was over. He could still see her little gray slippers and the white face and the atmosphere of her charm.

He thought again of suicide, but he grew hungry, and after all a man must eat. He went to a restaurant where he was in the habit of whiling away some happy hours. He couldn't stand the questions of the fellows at his club.

He began to eat forlornly, pitying himself, denouncing the world in general, vowing that if he lived at all he would never take any further interest in life. There was no longer any excitement or zest or vim in things, and he didn't enjoy his coffee.

Then gradually he began to take on the rôle of hero to himself, and he began to realize how loyalty had been abused; how like a martyr he stood (or sat) suffering for the defection of another. He gloried in the fact that he had such a soft heart that he must needs suffer from his very sensibility. He composed a vague poem about the throes of sensitive souls. In this poem he exhorted all ultra-sensitive natures to brace themselves against the hard materialistic facts of a hard materialistic world. There were stanzas about the tilt of a head in pride. There was a refrain about a white, white forehead.

By the time he had drunk his third cup of coffee he was worked up to a very intensity of epic inspiration. Irene in his dreams looked more beautiful than ever before, and in his fancy the emotional pull of her spirit was accentuated until he felt that he could die or compose sonnets or suffer martyrdom or live alone in some hut in the woodsy woods. He liked the word woodsy.

He got out his note-book and began to write, and what he wrote wasn't so bad; much worse has been written and pronounced rather good.

He was startled to find that he had secured the glow he wanted in another way than by joy and satisfaction. He was thankful and glad, because he enjoyed new sensations as much as a mortal could. Why, there was a thrill in sorrow itself! He could always have this sadness to thrill him—and wasn't he grateful that he was one of the few human beings who could actually suffer intensely and deeply? There was nothing superficial about him, at least.

The idea came to him that there were other girls—sympathetic girls—beside Irene—after he imagined that he had grown out of this queer distaste for the thought of other girls. But that, he pondered, was an unlucky concept, and he dismissed it at once—well, anyway, almost at once.

* * * * *

That afternoon back in another section of the city a music teacher with a pale face and eyes that were tired from weeping the night before was counting wearily for a small girl who would never play but who was determined to try. After her lessons were over she would cry again—for she had really cared. And there was only reality for her—not visions and imagination and superficial introspection.

IN Wall Street there are two sorts of men: those who know figures and those who know men. The former are bookkeepers; the latter are millionaires.

L'AMOUR.—Love is never absolute, entire. In it, though it be as deep as the deepest sea, there is always elbow-room for a bit of a glance at some other man or woman.

EMANCIPATION

By Edith Chapman

I

AS Max Winthrop entered this drawing-room which he hadn't stood inside of for three years, he threw around him a long, brooding glance. It was apparently as he had left it. Scantily furnished; long cool spaces between the tables and chairs; flowers in at least six places; informal chintz at the windows; the oval of Linda's photograph on the same wall-space where it had always hung. Unobtrusive, delicate, it was still the room's focal centre, after all these years. He walked slowly across the floor to it. His left foot dragged a little; his arms were behind him to hide from his own view the stump which was his right wrist.

He studied the lovely face idolatrously, and then remembered with a pang that she too by this time would be three years older. What did three years do to a woman? Not the same surely as what they could do to a man, in the trenches, day in and day out under smoke and fire. They could turn a young man middle-aged. . . .

It was incredible that she had waited for him those three years. Waiting was so hideous! One heard one's life dripping slowly; wasting away like water that runs from a leaking cup. And waiting, for a woman, must be doubly hideous. What had he done to deserve her loyalty? What had he ever given her but pain? How he had used to torture her!

He closed his eyes, and remembered their countless passionate colloquys in cafés and hotel lounges and theatres and deserted parks. In those days it had been he who was all for temporizing, for postponing. He had fought her off, cruelly and conscientiously, after the manner of very self-centred men. He had been bitter to her. The fact that he also tortured himself was nothing to the point. But in those days he had had his work, his art. That was changed now.

With a sharp gesture he swung his right arm forward to bring it within the range of his vision. He needed often to steel his nerves with a sight of that ugly stump. What would she say to it?

Even at that, the war had let him off easier than it had a good many. Only a slight limp and the right hand missing. That is, if one were to discount his genius, which had also been cut off. Missing, one right hand; therefore, one artist.

A one-handed pianist might be a gruesome joke in a vaudeville show; but as an artist he had died as irrevocably as if he had died in France. It was singular that he could go on living so jauntily, breathing and laughing and eating and talking; knowing all the while that the valid part of him, the creator, was dead. For he hadn't been able to force himself to compose anything since the power to play was gone. How could one compose without having beneath one's fingers the feel of the keys? It wasn't his mind, it was his fingers that had used to find those melodies which they were now making such a to-do over everywhere. They might have made it when it would have done

him some good; not this sentimental post-mortem business.

He could never play again. Sometimes this thought screwed him down, like an actual physical weight, in the middle of one of his sleepless nights. All his years of work, his gradually developed technique, that touch of his —like velvet over iron—were worse than wasted. It would have been better if he had never played. Never again would he feel his arm muscles tightening way back to the shoulder for the attack; that sense of struggle and then of release as the tones came free; in their centre the sharp but calculated intoxication which he had learned so carefully how to produce; in moments of rare exaltation, that feeling, as of his actually riding the piano as one rides a horse, forcing it to rebellious obedience, controlling it. . . .

From now on his life would be the ordinary small change of mediocre moments. The big throbbing moments, whether of despair or of triumph, were over for good.

It was odd how little he seemed to care. Life was very agreeable, even in its less heroic aspects. He was awfully thankful to be alive.

He heard steps outside the room. He stood his ground squarely, the maimed arm in front of him, his eyes on the door.

II

LINDA came all the distance of the long room to him, with eyes that could seem to stray no farther than his face. Her own was like a transparent glass, filled almost beyond the brim with a wine that seemed to overflow at her lips and in her tense gaze. Her still pallor was as always too concentrated. There was, to her brilliance, that old, agonizing quality which had used so to infuriate him. How could one go on, day in day out, being so tense, and still live?

"So you've come, Max?" was all she said.

She held out her hands to his and then, for the first time, remembered his bereavement. She touched the maimed arm tenderly, but with that bird-like, experimental swiftness which was a part of her avid and always active curiosity.

"It matters so little, dear, in the face of what you have actually done. Out of your few years you managed to wring so much."

He shook his head. "I had hardly begun."

"And yet, Max, they are playing your things everywhere this winter. You are the rage; didn't you know? I was in New York only last week and Petrovski gave an entire programme of those little songs you wrote for me in 1913. Do you remember?"

He smiled down at her.

"Charity," he pronounced laconically.

But the old caustic bitterness, which she had learned to shrink from, was entirely absent from his voice.

He drew her to him with his left arm, and pushing back her hair kissed her passionately on her forehead and eyes and cheeks and lips.

"So you've waited, little girl, as you threatened to. Was it worth waiting for, this maimed, one-armed creature who has come back? Shall you repent your bargain?"

The oval of her face swam, as if under water, beneath the film of emotion which, while lighting it, blurred it. Everything about her seemed to ebb, except her violent eyes, into which all the light and life of her gathered. They were, more than ever since he had known them, dark and dilated and painful with consciousness.

"Crazy little woman," he muttered. And then again, "Crazy little woman."

III

THEY were still sitting, an hour later, on the stiff, French divan which always used to stand opposite the piano. Looking for this latter object he for the first time missed it. How could he not have missed it before? It had been the most

conspicuous and redundant feature of this otherwise parsimonious room.

"But Linda, what have you done with it?" he asked her. "How could you ever get it through the door?"

Then, as her eyes followed his to the great empty space which she had tried to cover with a silly lacquer table, "I sold it, Max."

"How long ago?"

She hung her head. "A week ago."

"A week ago I wrote you I was coming. You sold it so that it shouldn't be here when I arrived. Isn't that it?"

"But, dear, what use was it to me? I never play. I only kept it for you..."

Her voice faltered in terror at her crudity of having so early and needlessly forced on him the sense of his loss. Her tongue was stupid to-day; she was too full of counter-groping perceptions; he was too inscrutable.

Again he smiled at her that foreign, gentle smile which she hadn't yet learned to gauge. Was it the most consummate cynicism; was it mockery; was it his desperate acquiescence?

"You needn't have; I don't mind. I think I should rather have liked to find it here.... You could still have played it for me, sometimes."

"I?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"I play to *you!*"

"Linda, don't you understand? I'm only a layman now. As an artist, I'm through, dear; *finished.*"

"You can smile about it."

"Yes, I can smile. Be glad for that."

"But *how* can you?" She was always one to press a point; particularly one which hurt her.

He scowled as if, himself, sincerely puzzled by this same problem. "I don't know. I haven't figured it out yet. Whether this—this calm state of indifference is simply anæsthesia, whether the sense of loss is coming later, I can't make out. But so far I feel nothing; except, perhaps, relief."

"Relief?"

"I used, you know, to have to work so hard. Like a stoker, and worse, for my brain kept working too. Often ten hours a day at the piano. Or weeks, composing. Without much rest day or night. No respite. No lazy pleasure such as other men, even the hardest-working men, permit themselves. Even you were a torment then. My chief torment. Sometimes I hated you. That was when I wanted you most. You kept interfering; our love interfered. Everything seemed to be in league to interfere with me. Now nothing *can* interfere with anything. It's nice to be able just to loll in the sun, and to smoke, and to think ... and to kiss you, my darling."

"Is that the relief?"

"I don't know," he repeated. Then in a deeper tone, "When will you marry me?"

"I'd marry you," she promised, "to-morrow, if you pressed it. But lacking that, I'll marry you as soon as you like."

IV

After he had left her, she sat on alone for sometime. She had so many things to think of. They had agreed at last that they were to be married. Or rather, *he* had agreed. It struck her as odd that she should be marrying again.

It was more than five years now since her husband had left her, and in that interval she had been living alone. A long, dreary stretch; but, after all, her way of life. She would never think of changing it, except for Max. It had done very well.

For five years she had loved Max Winthrop, and for over four he had known it. It had been a tense, tumultuous period, that last year before he had left for France. She couldn't easily think of it without a clutch of the old pain.

In those days his work had absorbed him; tyrannized over him; deformed him almost. Everything else had had to give way to it; *she* had had to give way. And it was strangest of all that, with no jealousy in her heart for that fetish of his, she had still never been able to believe in it as he believed. It

wasn't that she hadn't wanted to. She *had*, passionately; she had tried; but her lucidity, her absolute sincerity would not let her.

She hadn't been able to see him as a great artist, for all her loyalty and the evidence of his earnestness to the contrary. She had realized his tenacity, his power to immolate himself. For hadn't she been the closest witness to his ability to concentrate day in, day out; to travail as few are capable of doing for that technique, that control which, after all, he seemed never quite to achieve.

For all the integrity of his playing, its brilliance, its range of attack, its careful, painstaking restraint—it had never quite rounded the corner, swept free! It had never seemed quite to make the sparks fly, those sparks of genius, of divinity which, once recognizing, one can never mistake. He was an excellent executive; he was intelligent; he was subtle; he had the most sensitive and highly differentiated technique. But he wasn't a *genius*. He wasn't great.

His success hadn't been phenomenal either, considering his eight years of application. It was only in those last few months that he had managed to get even the three concert engagements in New York and Boston which had been finally accorded him. His own explanation of this sounded plausible: that in these days, money and pull were required to launch even the biggest of musical artists. Certainly he was right. And, moreover, he *had* got started. His songs had been played even in those days.

Now, as she had told him, they were a kind of rage. Almost every concert programme had some of them. Everyone was pointing him out, almost tearfully, as that great genius whom the misfortunes of war had sardonically cut off from his inevitable fulfilment. If he had been underrated before, he was in danger of being overrated now. This she felt, in spite of all her tenderness for him, with a bitter pang. It was all very inexplicable.

She went back over some of those old, terrible times they had had together, in those days when he had been always fighting her.

"Can't you see, Linda, that I'm not a free agent? I have no right to love you. It takes time and strength. I can't afford that time. Whether you believe it or not, like it or not, you are my enemy."

Those bitter, endless discussions, for he had always come back to her, even then. His passion for her had been too strong for him quite to loose himself. It was on this she had based her most desperate hope. It had been a time of torture for them both.

And now it was over. Could it be that it was over? That they would actually shake down, in another six months or so, into the practical, domestic relationship which marriage implies?

She had back one of her old, troubling visions of him, his curly head bent fanatically over the piano, his cruel, tenacious fingers worrying one little sector of notes until his eyes glazed, his whole body drooped from exhaustion. There followed the vision of him after one of his concerts; his rapt look, his eyes which failed to see her at all, to see anything; that habit he had, at such times, of lashing about the room for hours, talking to her even, yet never caring that she was there.

She had another vision of him at the close of one of those long, excruciating stretches when for days, perhaps eight, even ten, he had scarcely left his piano; scarcely eaten; scarcely slept; when, at the end, he had slunk to her, physically exhausted, spiritless, nervous to the point of insanity.

It was at such times that she had wanted most to believe in him, that she had yearned over him and despaired the most. She would never see him in any of those aspects again. . . . It was very singular.

What would he do?

She thought again of his face as it had appeared to her that afternoon. So different! For all the thinness of it, the lines and dents with which the three

years had marked it, tranquil as she had never seen it, dispassionate, *happy*. In place of the old fevered moodiness, a steady, sober, but not unjoyous assurance. And the fact that he wouldn't have minded a sight of the piano, and that he could speak of his affliction as *relief!*

What did it all mean? She could only wait and hope. To-day she had seemed to have him at last. But she might easily lose him. She had lost him before. She couldn't feel convinced yet that his artist's spirit was really at peace.

V

THE days wore on and this mood of incongruous tranquillity seemed still to brood over him. He was satisfied just to sit or walk with her. To waste whole afternoons, not to mention the evenings. To discuss little prosy details that formerly he would scarcely have been able to think of without an imperious resentment of impatience. He had even on one occasion consented to play bridge!

They never argued now, or tormented each other. His high spirit never flagged as it once had; he was always quietly cheerful; there brooded now, even behind the saddest shadows of his changing expression, a steadfast, sombre glow.

He was still a kind of sacred rage through the town. He was pointed out whenever he entered a theatre or public place of any sort. He was made way for, and conceded to, and treated in all respects as the important artist that people seemed sincerely to believe he inevitably must have been had fate not thwarted him. And this adulation, which would once so have delighted him, seemed to leave him utterly unmoved. Nothing appeared of late to move him out of the circle of his serenity. Or was it cynicism? She wished she could make out, once and for all.

He even took her to the concerts where his things were being played, criticized them disinterestedly, on occasion made fun of them. She had never heard in his voice, in relation to himself, quite that detached note before.

They went to all sorts of musical affairs. Far from shunning these, as she had imagined that he would tend to do for several years at least, he seemed to take a keen pleasure in them. And the greater the artist, the more wholesouled and unreserved was his admiration. Could it be that he was holding back no slightest twinge of jealousy, no rebellion? This couldn't have been, four years previous, unhandicapped as he then had been.

At Rachmaninoff, for example, he would once have sat glum and silent, and have come out to lash himself to his piano stool in an agony of determination and despair. At this particular concert he veritably glowed with enthusiasm from the beginning of the programme to the end. His expression reminded her of his former exultance after some particularly good performance of his own. Only now the satisfaction seemed deeper, the excitement less feverish and more fundamental. Had he actually succeeded in teaching himself, in those first hard months of his deprivation, to enjoy vicariously what he could no longer enjoy at first hand. Had he got to the point where, in sheer desperation, he could actually sink his own individuality, identify himself with another?

What *was* the secret of the change in him? Again and again she asked herself. Again and again she went to sleep at night, dreading to wake in the morning lest she find him changed back into the old enigmatic, temperamental fanatic at whose hand she used to suffer.

VI

ON the afternoon before their wedding they sat together again in the familiar drawing-room. She looked very frail and exquisite in her narrow lavender gown. She had to-day, to a marked degree, that fragile, glamorous quality which he claimed was her pecu-

liar note. Against the chill lavender of her dress, her pallor was more positive than ever, and more seductive. The pale, smooth gold of her hair was more than ever Medicean. There was a decadent charm to her long thin throat, her delicate ears and wrists and waist and ankles. He felt, for once, no inclination to touch her. She was like some rare and beautiful *objet d'art* which for the moment he desired simply to look at, to admire, and luxuriously to realize as being uniquely his.

"What shall you *do?*" she wondered. "I keep speculating about that. Of course there's plenty of money. Either one of us, without the other, would have enough. But what shall you *do?*"

His brows drew together in a contemplative scowl that was, however, very different from the old imperious frown.

"For a while I shall simply enjoy, Linda; take my shot at happiness. Do you realize how little I have had, so far? How little I have allowed myself?"

"Or any one else," she muttered.

"Well, for the next year, then, we shall both try our luck. Shan't we? We'll travel and read and spend long hours just talking or thinking aloud. We'll make a cult of our inclinations. We'll listen to all the music our senses can hold, to the point of saturation if you like, and examine whatever strikes our eyes as beautiful. Which in my case will be, chiefly, *you*. We'll taste and smell and feel and think and move and stand still with the object always of our greatest possible pleasure. In that way perhaps I can make up a little for what, in all the thirty-two years of my life, I've been content to miss."

"Why did you miss it? You never needed to."

"I thought I needed to." He paused, and for a moment she feared that she saw the old subtle shadow creeping over his face and clouding it. But only for a moment. His gaze came back to rest on her, warm and immediate and reassuring.

"And after that?" she still wondered. "After we have smelled and tasted and so on. What shall you do when we come home?"

"There will, more than ever, be *you*."

"But aside from me . . ."

"I think," and his mouth drooped whimsically while he crumpled a piece of paper in the long, thin fingers of his left hand, "I think I shall take a stab at the profession for which—about twelve years back—my father insisted on having me trained."

"You—a lawyer!"

"I may make a good one, at least passable. Don't be so incredulous. My father always thought I would. And he was right in one respect. He may very well prove to be in this."

"In what respect was he right?" She tried not to tremble, not to exult prematurely in what she sensed, with all the intensity of her clutching eager intuitions, was coming.

"He knew and declared innumerable times that I hadn't it in me to be an artist. A good craftsman perhaps, but never an artist. No Winthrop has ever been an artist . . . He was right."

"Right?" She scarcely seemed to breathe. The colour ebbed back from everything save her lips and her fervid, adoring eyes.

"Yes. I wasn't an artist, Linda. I've never been one. Never would have been one. I know it now."

"How do you know?"

"I know by the measure of my relief at no longer having to try to be. Oh Linda, I'm so glad to be free from the fetish which I sincerely believed in those days was genius."

He leaned farther back with a long loose stretch of all his body. "I'm so glad, my dear. You can't know. Even to have lost a hand for it."

"You are glad that you can't play any more?" She seemed to want, in this new obscurity of his optimism, to have every landmark made clear—not to run the risk of a single *i* undotted, a single *t* uncrossed.

"I'm glad I no longer nurse the delusion that I ever could play, ever *did*

play. I'm glad to know the truth. You see, once recognizing it, I can live quite serenely now as the normal, carefree creature I am. I have no longer any obligation to be always driving myself, torturing myself, straining against the grain. For that's what it was, really; my puritan sense of obligation. Once having accepted the premise that I *was* an artist, I had to be always straining, don't you see? And it's bad enough to strain *with* the grain, I imagine. Though I suppose in such a case there are moments of pleasure. But with me there were none. It was always torture. Even my pitiful little successes were torture, for I somehow dumbly realized how they weren't enough, weren't *the thing*. That's why, poor girl, I tortured you. You seemed—with your reality—always threatening to expose me. That was it, Linda. I realize it now. And so I fought you off. . . . Well, it's over, thanks to this," he touched his wrist. "I know now; and I'm free. We're both free."

She crept over to him, laying her head against his cheek. "Knowing doesn't hurt you too much?"

"Linda, you have known?" He tried but failed to raise her face. It only burrowed deeper against his.

Her voice came muffled, and infinitely faint. "I've always known, Max darling. Oh, forgive me."

"And those people," he mused later. "Isn't it an imposture, Linda? Oughtn't I to tell them? They seem to be making a regular cult of me. They'll have me an artist, whether or no."

"Let them, dear." She moved her face up and down against his face. "For after all you haven't cheated. Everything that you did was as honest as you could make it, as beautiful. Simply, it wasn't—stupendous. But they could do a lot worse than worship you."

"Haven't cheated," he echoed her. And this time he did succeed in drawing her down into his lap. "Not unless you admit that I cheated myself for about ten years, and came near cheating you. Supposing I had lost you?"

Now that he had her under his eyes, she let her intense, ardent gaze drain into his. "There was no chance of your losing me. I was simply waiting—for my moment. This moment. The moment when you should realize what I did, and therefore be able not to think of me as wronging you. I saw how, in that moment you could really consent to *need* me."

"In other words, you were waiting," he built it up, "for my emancipation in order once more to enslave me?"

Her arms were wound tightly around him.

"At any rate, it's a different slavery, dear, not so without—without promise," she murmured in self-defence.

WHEN a woman succeeds in business, it is usually a sign that she has failed in love.

REALLY wise men are very rare. How many has the world seen in five thousand years? Solomon, Shakespeare . . . you and me.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF MADAME LEANDRE

By Helen Woljeska

HUMANITY is divided into two classes: those who want to have, and those who want to be. To have, to accumulate—power, riches, luxuries, display, pleasures. To be, to express—lovely, subtle, mysterious, exotic things. To the first class belong all business-men and women, from the shoe clerk to the coal king, all doctors and lawyers, church elders and car conductors, gunmen and grocers, politicians and seamstresses, society people, men about town, women of the street, people who write best sellers and draw magazine covers, husbands, trained nurses, wives, and children. . . . To the other class belong only fools, lovers, and poets.

THE MODEL

By Amanda Benjamin Hall

AS fluid as a stream she seems to flow
Between the cold, keen watchers, row on row,
Appraising and dissecting with their eyes.
Her face betrays no flicker of surprise,
Disfiguring intelligence or laughter;
But like an empty moon that walks the sky,
She takes her wordless, flawless beauty by,
With clouds of chiffon lightly trailing after. . . .

As slender as a sickle, sheathed in gold,
She swoons away in silk or gleams like fire
In some brocaded story, partly told,
Suggesting dainty glamour of desire.

The pretty body pampered to excess,
Who ever heeds her shabby soul's distress—
I wonder is there anyone who cares
What rags her spirit wears?

THE SMILERS

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

I

WE all have that exasperated moment!

There are times when you almost tell the harmless old lady next door what you really think of her face—that it ought to be on a nightnurse in a house for the blind; when you'd like to ask the man you've been waiting ten minutes for if he isn't all over-heated from racing the postman down the block; when you nearly say to the waiter that if they deducted a cent. from the bill for every degree the soup was below tepid the hotel would owe you half a dollar; when—and this is the infallible earmark of true exasperation—a smile affects you as a red flag affects a bull.

But the moment passes. Scars may remain on your dog or your collar or your telephone receiver, but your soul has slid gently back into its place between the lower edge of your heart and the upper edge of your stomach, and all is at peace.

But the imp who turns on the shower-bath of exasperation apparently made it so hot one time in Sylvester Stockton's early youth that he never dared dash in and turn it off—in consequence no first old man in an amateur production of a Victorian comedy was ever more pricked and prodded by the daily phenomena of life than was Sylvester at thirty.

Accusing eyes behind spectacles—suggestion of a stiff neck—this will have to do for his description, since he is not the hero of this story. He is the plot. He is the factor that makes it one story instead of three stories. He makes remarks at the beginning and end.

The late afternoon sun was loitering pleasantly along Fifth Avenue when Sylvester, who had just come out of that hideous public library where he had been consulting some ghastly book, told his impossible chauffeur (it is true that I am following his movements through his own spectacles) that he wouldn't need his stupid, incompetent services any longer. Swinging his cane (which he found too short) in his left hand (which he should have cut off long ago since it was constantly offending him), he began walking slowly down the Avenue.

When Sylvester walked at night he frequently glanced behind and on both sides to see if anyone was sneaking up on him. This had become a constant mannerism. For this reason he was unable to pretend that he didn't see Betty Tearle sitting in her machine in front of Tiffany's.

Back in his early twenties he had been in love with Betty Tearle. But he had depressed her. He had misanthropically dissected every meal, motor trip and musical comedy that they attended together, and on the few occasions when she had tried to be especially nice to him—from a mother's point of view he had been rather desirable—he had suspected hidden motives and fallen into a deeper gloom than ever. Then one day she told him that she would go mad if he ever again parked his pessimism in her sun-parlour.

And ever since then she had seemed to be smiling—uselessly, insultingly, charmingly smiling.

"Hello, Sylvo," she called.

"Why—how do Betty." He wished she wouldn't call him Sylvo—it sounded like a—like a darn monkey or something.

"How goes it?" she asked cheerfully. "Not very well, I suppose."

"Oh, yes," he answered stiffly, "I manage."

"Taking in the happy crowd?"

"Heavens, yes." He looked around him. "Betty, why are they happy? What are they smiling at? What do they find to smile at?"

Betty flashed at him a glance of radiant amusement.

"The women may smile because they have pretty teeth, Sylvo."

"You smile," continued Sylvester cynically, "because you're comfortably married and have two children. You imagine you're happy, so you suppose everyone else is."

Betty nodded.

"You may have hit it, Sylvo—" The chauffeur glanced around and she nodded at him. "Good-bye."

Sylvo watched with a pang of envy which turned suddenly to exasperation as he saw she had turned and smiled at him once more. Then her car was out of sight in the traffic, and with a voluminous sigh he galvanized his cane into life and continued his stroll.

At the next corner he stepped in at a cigar store and there he ran into Waldron Crosby. Back in the days when Sylvester had been a prize pigeon in the eyes of débutantes he had also been a game partridge from the point of view of promoters. Crosby, then a young bond salesman, had given him much safe and sane advice and saved him many dollars. Sylvester liked Crosby as much as he could like anyone. Most people did like Crosby.

"Hello, you old bag of 'nerves,'" cried Crosby genially, "come and have a big gloom-dispelling Corona."

Sylvester regarded the cases anxiously. He knew he wasn't going to like what he bought.

"Still out at Larchmont, Waldron?" he asked.

"Right-o."

"How's your wife?"

"Never better."

"Well," said Sylvester suspiciously, "you brokers always look as if you're smiling at something up your sleeve. It must be a hilarious profession."

Crosby considered.

"Well," he admitted, "it varies—like the moon and the price of soft drinks—but it has its moments."

"Waldron," said Sylvester earnestly, "you're a friend of mine—please do me the favour of not smiling when I leave you. It seems like a—like a mockery."

A broad grin suffused Crosby's countenance.

"Why, you crabbed old son-of-a gun!"

But Sylvester with an irate grunt had turned on his heel and disappeared.

He strolled on. The sun finished its promenade and began calling in the few stray beams it had left among the westward streets. The Avenue darkened with black bees from the department stores; the traffic swelled in to an interlaced jam; the buses were packed four deep like platforms above the thick crowd; but Sylvester, to whom the daily shift and change of the city was a matter only of sordid monotony, walked on, taking only quick sideward glances through his frowning spectacles.

He reached his hotel and was elevated to his four-room suite on the twelfth floor.

"If I dine downstairs," he thought, "the orchestra will play either 'Smile, Smile, Smile' or 'The Smiles That You Gave To Me.' But then if I go to the Club I'll meet all the cheerful people I know, and if I go somewhere else where there's no music, I won't get anything fit to eat."

He decided to have dinner in his rooms.

An hour later, after disparaging some broth, a squab and a salad, he tossed fifty cents to the room-waiter, and then held up his hand warningly.

"Just oblige me by not smiling when you say thanks."

He was too late. The waiter had grinned.

"Now, will you please tell me," asked Sylvester peevishly, "what on earth you have to smile about."

The waiter considered. Not being a reader of the magazines he was not sure what was characteristic of waiters, yet he supposed something characteristic was expected of him.

"Well, Mister," he answered, glancing at the ceiling with all the ingenuousness he could muster in his narrow, sallow countenance, "it's just something my face does when it sees money comin'."

Sylvester waved him away.

"Waiters are happy because they've never had anything better," he thought. "They haven't enough imagination to want anything."

At nine o'clock from sheer boredom he sought his expressionless bed.

II

As Sylvester left the cigar store, Waldron Crosby followed him out, and turning off Fifth Avenue down a cross street entered a brokerage office. A plump man with nervous hands rose and hailed him.

"Hello, Waldron."

"Hello, Potter—I just dropped in to hear the worst."

The plump man frowned.

"We've just got the news," he said.

"Well, what is it. Another drop?"

"Closed at seventy-eight. Sorry, old boy."

"Whew!"

"Hit pretty hard?"

"Cleaned out!"

The plump man shook his head, indicating that life was too much for him, and turned away.

Crosby sat there for a moment without moving. Then he rose, walked into Potter's private office and picked up the phone.

"Gi'me Larchmont 838."

In a moment he had his connection.

"Mrs. Crosby there?"

A man's voice answered him.

"Yes; this you, Crosby? This is Doctor Shipman."

"Dr. Shipman?" Crosby's voice showed sudden anxiety.

"Yes—I've been trying to reach you all afternoon. The situation's changed and we expect the child to-night."

"To-night?"

"Yes. Everything's O.K. But you'd better come right out."

"I will. Good-bye."

He hung up the receiver and started out the door, but paused as an idea struck him. He returned, and this time called a Manhattan number.

"Hello, Donny, this is Crosby."

"Hello, there, old boy. You just caught me; I was going—"

"Say, Donny, I want a job right away, quick."

"For whom?"

"For me."

"Why, what's the—"

"Never mind. Tell you later. Got one for me?"

"Why, Waldron, there's not a blessed thing here except a clerkship. Perhaps next—"

"What salary goes with the clerkship?"

"Forty—say forty-five a week."

"I've got you. I start to-morrow."

"All right. But say, old man—"

"Sorry, Donny, but I've got to run."

Crosby hurried from the brokerage office with a wave and a smile at Potter. In the street he took out a handful of small change and after surveying it critically hailed a taxi.

"Grand Central—quick!" he told the driver.

III

At six o'clock Betty Tearle signed the letter, put it into an envelope and wrote her husband's name upon it. She went into his room and after a moment's hesitation set a black cushion on the bed and laid the white letter on it so that it could not fail to attract his attention when he came in. Then with a quick glance around the room she walked into the hall and upstairs to the nursery.

"Clare," she called softly.

"Oh, Mummy!" Clare left her doll's house and scurried to her mother.

"Where's Billy, Clare?"

Billy appeared eagerly from under the bed.

"Got anything for me?" he inquired politely.

His mother's laugh ended in a little catch and she caught both her children to her and kissed them passionately. She found that she was crying quietly and their flushed little faces seemed cool against the sudden fever racing through her blood.

"Take care of Clare—always—Billy darling—"

Billy was puzzled and rather awed.

"You're crying," he accused gravely.

"I know—I know I am—"

Clare gave a few tentative sniffles, hesitated, and then clung to her mother in a storm of weeping.

"I d-don't feel good, Mummy—I don't feel good."

Betty soothed her quietly.

"We won't cry any more, Clare dear—either of us."

But as she rose to leave the room her glance at Billy bore a mute appeal, too vain, she knew, to be registered on his childish consciousness.

Half an hour later as she carried her travelling bag to a taxi-cab at the door she raised her hand to her face in mute admission that a veil served no longer to hide her from the world.

"But I've chosen," she thought dully.

As the car turned the corner she wept again, resisting a temptation to give up and go back.

"Oh, my God!" she whispered. "What am I doing? What have I done? What have I done?"

IV

When Jerry, the sallow, narrow-faced waiter, left Sylvester's rooms he reported to the head-waiter, and then checked out for the day.

He took the subway south and alighting at Williams Street, walked a few blocks and entered a billiard parlour.

An hour later he emerged with a cigarette drooping from his bloodless lips, and stood on the sidewalk as if hesitating before making a decision. He set off eastward.

As he reached a certain corner his gait suddenly increased and then quite as suddenly slackened. He seemed to want to pass by, yet some magnetic attraction was apparently exerted on him, for with a sudden face-about he turned in at the door of a cheap restaurant—half-cabaret, half chop-suey parlour—where a miscellaneous assortment gathered nightly.

Jerry found his way to a table situated in the darkest and most obscure corner. Seating himself with a contempt for his surroundings that betokened familiarity rather than superiority he ordered a glass of claret.

The evening had begun. A fat woman at the piano was expelling the last jauntiness from a hackneyed foxtrot, and a lean, dispirited male was assisting her with lean, dispirited notes from a violin. The attention of the patrons was directed at a dancer wearing soiled stockings and done largely in peroxide and rouge who was about to step upon a small platform, meanwhile exchanging pleasantries with a fat, eager person at the table beside her who was trying to capture her hand.

Over in the corner Jerry watched the two by the platform and, as he

gazed, the ceiling seemed to fade out, the walls growing into tall buildings and the platform becoming the top of a Fifth Avenue bus on a breezy spring night three years ago. The fat, eager person disappeared, the short skirt of the dancer rolled down and the rouge faded from her cheeks —and he was beside her again in an old delirious ride, with the lights blinking kindly at them from the tall buildings beside and the voices of the street merging into a pleasant somnolent murmur around them.

"Jerry," said the girl on top of the bus, "I've said that when you were gettin' seventy-five I'd take a chance with you. But, Jerry, I can't wait for ever."

Jerry watched several street numbers sail by before he answered.

"I don't know what's the matter," he said helplessly, "they won't raise me. If I can locate a new job—"

"You better hurry, Jerry," said the girl; "I'm gettin' sick of just livin' along. If I can't get married I got a couple of chances to work in a cabaret —get on the stage maybe."

"You keep out of that," said Jerry quickly. "There ain't no need, if you just wait about another month or two."

"I can't wait for ever, Jerry," repeated the girl. "I'm tired of stayin' poor alone."

"It won't be so long," said Jerry, clenching his free hand, "I can make it somewhere, if you'll just wait."

But the bus was fading out and the ceiling was taking shape and the murmur of the April streets was fading into the rasping whine of the violin— for that was all three years before and now he was sitting here.

The girl glanced up on the platform and exchanged a metallic impersonal smile with the dispirited violinist, and Jerry shrank farther back in his corner watching her with burning intensity.

"Your hands belong to anybody that wants them now," he cried silently and bitterly. "I wasn't man enough to keep you out of that—not man enough, by God, by God!"

But the girl by the door still toyed with the fat man's clutching fingers as she waited for her time to dance.

V

SYLVESTER STOCKTON tossed restlessly upon his bed. The room, big as it was, smothered him, and a breeze drifting in and bearing with it a rift of moon seemed laden only with the cares of the world he would have to face next day.

"They don't understand," he thought. "They don't see, as I do, the underlying misery of the whole damn thing. They're hollow optimists. They smile because they think they're always going to be happy.

"Oh, well," he mused drowsily, "I'll run up to Rye to-morrow and endure more smiles and more heat. That's all life is—just smiles and heat, smiles and heat."

WOMEN judge a man by the way he kisses. Men judge a man by the women he kisses.

THE SEARCH

By Roger Blake

AT twenty-five he was certain that none of the women in his town would do for a wife. At thirty he was equally certain that he could not find a congenial spouse in the whole country. For ten years thereafter he travelled in foreign climes seeking a mate. Many girls looked at him, many smiled at him, some kissed him—but all lacked the essential qualities he wished for in his wife. Weary and hopeless he returned to the town of his birth and married his cousin.

THE SPOILED SAILOR

By Francis Carlin

OUT upon the moorland, piling reeks of turf,
A flock of songs flew off from me and I was left alone,
Out among the bog-streams, thinking of the surf
With a wish upon the wherry I would own,
Troth, aye!
'Twas a gallant little wherry I would own.

Out upon the bogland, spading with a sloy,
The flock of songs returned to me—Och! sorrow on them all—
Out among the marsh-reeds when I was but a boy
With the sea-gulls flying over Donegal,
Troth, aye!
'Tis they came back as gulls to Donegal.

And here I'm on the moorland, piling turf in rows,
With not a song to fly from me and I as grey as grey
Out upon the bog-roads—but Goodness only knows
How far my wishes wandered in their day,
Troth, aye!
They've been off on lovely waters in their day.

THE GIFT OF ILLUSION

By L. M. Hussey

I

WHEN the victorious army of Cipriano Castro entered the city of Caracas, and Andrade fled to take ship at La Guayra without giving battle to Castro's forces, there was one among the many young adventurers following the new dictator who was unable to enter into the subsequent orgiastic celebration of the victory.

His brothers in arms were singing in the cafés, meeting their friends in the city with embraces and kisses, visiting the women whose business it was to please them, shooting those traitors who were, a few hours previously, Andrade's patriots, whilst he lay in delirium in the home of an unknown woman. She had discovered him lying almost at her door; three or four dogs were sniffing at his soiled uniform.

He had marched down from the mountains with the others, sustaining himself by the inflexibility of his will. Spasms of coughing assailed him again and again; once or twice blood gathered on his lips. He knew he was feverish, for his cheeks burned; his hands and feet were cold.

But he understood the necessity of reaching the city, fighting if he had to, for then he could go to his sister's home, receive the care he needed, and, in recuperation, look forward to the pleasant fruits of his grand adventure. Unhappily, his will failed him almost in the moment of realization.

The army entered from the north; young Galdos was attached to a small party sent forward for reconnaissance.

It was already fairly certain that no fight would be necessary. They had met none of Andrade's army, which seemed to have faded like the phantom of a dream. Something of the discipline relaxed; here and there a soldier paused to grimace and smile beneath a barred window, from which dark eyes peered out and lips smiled duskily in the twilight of a dim room. The captain refrained from striking these stragglers with the flat of his sword, being contented now with a jocularly abusive word and perhaps a good-humoured kick.

When the rumour of Andrade's flight spread among the troops—followed by the conviction of entire success, the end of the marching, the last of the fighting, the victory—young Galdos suffered his collapse.

He was stumbling a little behind the company, which was passing through a miserable *arrabal*, that unclean street known as the Horno Negro. The stone houses were all closed, even the fires within seemed extinguished, for no smoke curled up out of the decaying chimneys. But you had the feeling of being watched and were certain that the cautious people of this place observed behind their darkened windows. Only the dogs were visibly alive, yelping as the soldiers kicked them from the pavements.

In front of one of these houses a great weakness, like the expiring of life itself, descended upon Galdos, making the theft of his determination and all his strength. He buried his fingers in the tensed muscles of his legs, staring desperately after the retreating figures of his companions, and then, re-

laxing like a marionette no longer pulled by its wires, crumpled into the dirt of the Horno Negro.

When his next moment of lucidity came he sensed that a certain period of time must have passed, some days, a week, perhaps longer. He saw that he was in a strange room, but he had very little curiosity. Once or twice, in the course of this morning of awakening, an old man stumbled in and out of the apartment, muttering to himself. Most of the time a woman, a girl it seemed, remained at his bedside.

It was a very miserable bed; the mattress was stuffed with straw, the pillow likewise, but he was uncritical. As for the woman, he did not recognize her.

Yet there was a familiarity, a vague one, and his struggle to place her occupied all the strength of his weakened faculties.

It was obvious that she could not be some former, half-forgotten friend, for none of his friends lived in such a house. At the same time there was indubitable sense of accustomed experience in her nearness, in the touch of her hands now, as she raised his head, pressing a cup of water to his lips, in the shadowy activities of her slim figure moving here and there in the room, even in the sound of her voice, calling to the old man through the opened door. He shrank from questioning her, feeling, also, too weak for speech.

Then, as if by revelation, he understood. She was not, of course, any one of his former acquaintances. Indeed, he had never seen her until coming into her street with his companions. The familiarity of her presence was simply a result of those confused memories that remained from his delirium; he knew now that he had been very ill, unconscious of his surroundings; someone, this girl, had cared for him.

When, later, he tried to question her, her strange solicitude evidenced itself in an effort to quiet him, to put him off, defer explanations until a time when his strength would be adequate to understanding.

But he was insistent.

"Tell me," he demanded, "who are you? Why did you take me in? Is this the street where I fell? Did you pick me up? Someone did; I am almost sure I remember being lifted up."

She was standing near his bed, looking down into his face.

She made a soothing gesture with her hand, but did not touch him.

"Yes, señor, I found you," she said. "There is nothing for you to wonder about. Was I to let you lie there, kick you out of the way, perhaps, like one of the street dogs?"

For a moment he did not reply. Her humanity surprised him. He was young, and zestful of adventure, and the softening influences of life, the little pities, the little compassions, had never intimately touched his existence. In that moment she revealed something to him—another life.

He was watching her, in the twilight of that room.

In a way her type was not unfamiliar. Hers was not the aristocratic face; she fitted her surroundings. He knew these florid women of the *arrabals*. Many of them became the amorous playthings of the powerful men of the city. They were not without their own power and the discretion of numerous men had succumbed to their allure. This woman, however, was not especially charming.

Her features were heavy; the magnificent black eyes heightened the cheapness of her nose, cheeks, lips. The nose was without fineness, the lips too full, the cheekbones high and prominent. As in most of the people of her class, her European blood had been mixed with that of the native Indian; even her eyes had the familiar Oriental slant.

Later he questioned her again, at greater length.

"Where did you find me, señorita?" he asked.

"In front of this house; I nearly stumbled over you. I thought you were dead!"

She did not say that she had been frightened, and it occurred to him, with something of a thrill, that a dead man would neither be unfamiliar nor

terrible to a woman of her sort of life.

"And you carried me in here? You took a great chance, señorita! Suppose the president had maintained his power? He would probably have shot you for aiding an insurgent."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I did not think of that," she replied.

"What is the matter with me?" he asked.

She made a gesture that implied her utter ignorance.

"And you would have cared for me here until I died, perhaps?"

She did not answer.

"Without knowing who I was, whether I had friends or not?"

He saw that she was frowning, as if his words hurt as well as angered her.

"Are you accusing me of something, señor?" she asked.

The supposition shocked him. He denied it with all the vigour he could muster. Of course he had meant nothing of the kind; he intended, he told her, to express his surprise at her goodwill, her miraculous kindness.

She sat near his bed; he seized her hand and kissed it.

He asked for her name; she called herself Belen.

Then he told her of his sister. She seemed relieved to learn that some member of his family could take over the responsibility of his care, and from this he guessed that the mysterious old man, possibly her father, who appeared at intervals in the room but never addressed any words to the sufferer, was opposed to his presence in the house.

That was natural.

Life had probably taught the old man caution.

II

THE Señora Heraclia Galdos de Bustamente, young Galdos' sister, came immediately on receiving word of her brother from the girl Belen. She brought with her Dr. Delgado Palacios, from the faculty of medicine of the University; Dr. Palacios followed her through the low doorway of the little house. Heraclia was horrified to find her brother in such a place.

He was awake when she entered and the girl was rearranging the rough quilt that covered his bed. Heraclia ignored her, running to the bedside with a sharp cry of commiseration. She covered the cheeks of the boy with kisses, she held his hands, she smoothed his brow, her tears fell on his face. This outburst of extravagant emotion did not surprise him, knowing his sister, but he felt some annoyance. The doctor had to push her aside to examine him.

There was no change in the expression of Dr. Palacios' face as he went through the routine of percussion, auscultation, palpation. He was a very inscrutable man, but a really great physician.

When he stood up at last the sister inundated him with pleadings: was there any danger? what was the matter? wouldn't the boy soon recover?

During this excitement Belen, the girl, remained almost like a shadow in the room, ignored by all save young Galdos, who felt her presence poignantly.

Dr. Palacios vouchsafed nothing at that time. Indeed, he never admitted the truth directly to Heraclia, but, with his customary circumlocution, he communicated his findings, that evening, to Señor Bustamente, who repeated them brusquely to his wife, in a far less gentle way than the doctor would have done himself.

Her brother had acute tuberculosis, the lung condition being complicated with an apparent miliary infection. There was little hope of saving him. Indeed, the next morning, as preparations were being made for his removal to the Bustamente home, he died, with only the strange girl near him at the moment of his death. When Heraclia arrived her brother was for ever beyond the extravagances of her pity and her care.

For the first time, then, she acknowledged Belen's importance.

They were in the darkened room together; the priest had gone; young Galdos, whose constitutional frailty had

succumbed to the hazards and hardships of his adventurous choice, lay motionless upon the rough bed, with a glimmering crucifix upon his breast. Heraclia, whose emotions toward him were spent for the moment, found a fresh emotional outlet in the sight of the young girl standing near her.

Belen's kindness, Belen's humanity, suddenly loomed up in her mind in exaggerated proportions. In an instant the girl was a saint, her acts the manifestation of a marvellous inward grace; white robes of rare celestial stuff and the glow of an aurine halo could have sanctified her no further in the sister's emotional eyes.

Heraclia held out her hands.

"I have never thanked you!" she cried.

She swept Belen into her arms, unconscious of any lack of response. She kissed her with all the passion of her sentimental heart; smoothed her hair, her cheeks, her hands. Her fresh tears moistened Belen's face, who accepted the demonstration with something of a child's stolidity under the caresses of an over-fond parent. All the time Heraclia's speech flowed out like a fountain.

"Oh, my child!" she cried. "I can never forget you, I can never repay you! It seems impossible that you could have done so much for him. Poor boy, my poor brother! I will love you all my life, dear child. How dreadful that he did not live; you would have been his sweetheart!"

The amorous thought gave her a new emotion; she paused a moment to vision what might have been. But back of her effusion she had formed already a definite purpose, conceiving the girl's need. She would be indeed a sister, take Belen to her home to live with her. It seemed dreadful that such a soul should suffer here another hour, in this poor room, on this poor street! Already she was telling the girl of her purpose.

Belen listened, scarcely knowing what to say. She was not sure of the other woman's sincerity; the experiences of life had taught her suspicion and a certain stoicism of waiting.

But when the funeral was over and Heraclia came, keeping her word, to take Belen away with her, she consented, feeling that fortune had vouchsafed her a good turn. She was glad to leave the old man, her father, who was on his part willing enough to rid himself of an encumbrance. The evening of her departure he endeavoured to give his daughter some cunning advice, but she cut him short decisively.

"I can manage my own opportunities," she said.

In truth, she felt capable, having been well schooled by her life. She had few illusions, and most of these were practical and of service. Chance had put a great material benefit in her way and she was glad, accepting it. As for Heraclia, the agent of her good fortune, she felt no especial gratitude toward her, for the older woman was not one of the sort to arouse her sympathy. She was too soft, too effusive, and altogether too foolish.

But Belen was impressed when she entered her new home.

Señor Bustamente's house, situated on the western end of el Paraiso, not far from the pleasant grounds of the convent, was a revelation to her. She was unused to these large rooms, the pretty gallery, the court full of palms and flowers. Her indifferent heart was moved when Heraclia showed her the dainty room that was to be hers, and called the little mulatto maid who was told off for her service. She took the older woman in her arms and kissed her.

Then, at dinner, she met the master, Señor Nicomedes Bustamente.

III

Belen had wondered a little about him, endeavouring, now and then, to raise up his picture in her mind, his sort, the kind of a man he was. She was not very imaginative, and her efforts had been unsatisfactory. In order to dismiss him, until an actual meeting would afford real knowledge, she had set him down as something of a fool.

This opinion was the natural corol-

lary of her feeling, however softened it had become, toward his wife. Having spent all her life in the harsh stress of material insufficiency, it was difficult for her to conceive of anyone, unless foolish, who would take a stranger so easily into his household, upon the mere representations of his wife, and for a reason that appeared so inadequate. She forgot her own succouring of the dead brother—but that was only temporary and was, moreover, what nearly anyone of her temperament would have done.

Concerning Bustamente, she saw now the error of her misinformed thoughts.

He was a fully impressive man. His stern face, relieved only by a softening droop of the eyes that suggested sensual appreciation, expressed an unyielding character. In a few minutes she perceived that he was no slave to his wife, and that those of her whims that met his yielding were granted through his own indifference. Belen felt that he was actually contemptuous of the older woman. For a reason that she did not trouble to analyze, this increased her respect.

Smiling, he advanced to meet her, not with naïve cordiality, but in a conventional way, whilst his eyes searched her face.

She met his gaze steadily, her oblique, jetty brows contracted a little.

He took her hand and pressed it.

"I want you to feel happy here," he said.

She did not reply. His words, she knew, were insincere, as he was unconcerned about her happiness. She felt no dislike on this account. Her impression of his nature found a response in her own prejudices.

During dinner Heraclia was the loquacious one, talking of Belen, of Belen's goodness, Belen's sweet soul. The girl was unembarrassed and silent. Bustamente also had little to say; once or twice Belen found him studying her with a frankness that was almost disconcerting. She noticed that he ate and drank freely.

She had already concluded that Bustamente was the one factor in the household forcing an element of uncertainty into her stay there. His wife was negligible. Her effusiveness might wear off, of course; she might even tire of her rôle of sister, but she was not the sort to bring about a definite break. Bustamente, however, was incalculable.

But she felt this without any troubled emotion. She was willing to wait, after the manner of her stoic nature. Later, when the time came to reckon with him, she would do her best to secure herself—in what way she did not attempt to imagine.

But nothing happened immediately. Life settled itself into a kind of agreeable routine. She had no work to do, no cares. Everyone arose late; Bustamente was seldom present at the breakfast table, being bilious from his nights in the cafés. Often he brought his friends home late in the evening, politicians of the new regime, with whom he was already on intimate terms. Awakened from her sleep the girl could hear their loud voices in the dining-room, the tinkle of glasses, snatches of song.

In the afternoon she was usually in the company of Heraclia; they drove about the city in their car, visiting Heraclia's friends. These were stupid women, Belen thought, and their scandalous gossip, dealing with people of whom she had no knowledge, bored her. Sometimes she regretted the harsh freedoms of the Horno Negro.

One evening, sitting on a marble bench in the green court, she saw Bustamente come out of his room, dressed to leave the house.

She regarded him idly for a moment; perhaps he divined her scrutiny, for he turned abruptly and over the intervening distance their eyes met. She found him smiling.

He crossed to the bench and stopped in front of her.

"Are you lonesome, child?" he asked.

"No, not lonesome, señor," she said.

"Are you contented here?"

"This is better than my other life," she said.

"But there could be more?"

She met his eyes, frowning a little. In the twilight her own eyes, orientally aslant, seemed larger and of greater dusky lustre. Her full lips scarcely appeared to move as she spoke.

"I don't understand," she replied in a low voice.

He laughed a little, looking off toward the house.

Then, fixing his eyes upon her face again, he made a request.

"May I sit down with you a few seconds?"

She moved to make a place for him, nodding without apparent emotion.

He seated himself at her side.

"Do you dislike me?" he asked.

She shrugged her shoulders; within, she was defensive.

"Of course not!"

"Afraid of me then?"

He found that she was smiling, with a touch of irony in the slight curve of her full lips.

"Why should I be afraid of you, señor?"

"Perhaps you will be, then?"

She paused before replying.

The city was very still; the cries of tropical birds had ceased, and the unfailing nocturnal air, coming in from the ridges of the Avila, whence it had gathered up the scent of luxuriant forests, plethoric with life, blended with the subtle, salt flavour of its origin, the sea, and stirred in the tall palms overhead, like voices whispering. The girl, meeting in the attitude of her shadowed form upon the marble bench this mood of the evening, seemed sculpturesque beside the man who questioned her there. But all her senses were alert.

"Do you intend to frighten me?" she asked.

He laughed again; he stood up abruptly, shaking his shoulders to adjust his coat.

"No," he said, still laughing. "You're my little sister."

She watched him as he retreated toward the house.

The problem of her life there, she believed, was now definitely complicated. Bustamente had made a move. His purpose was fairly transparent, but otherwise he was incalculable. Certainly he would be contemptuous of opinion—for he was not tame.

Her thoughts were in no way evasive. She wondered, definitely, what she would do if he determined to make love to her.

Her first thought was of Heraclia. But whatever her reaction to Bustamente might be, it would not remain conditioned upon any sentimental feelings toward his wife. Heraclia, it was true, had opened a door to her, given her more than her expectation; now she must secure herself.

The problem lay, then, between herself and Bustamente only. He could deprive her of her ease, her good fortune, her new material welfare, if his strength overstepped her defence. But, on the other hand, she might bring it about that he would give her more than she already had. . . .

At any rate, the conversation in the garden established a vague bond between the two, secretly acknowledged by both. Heraclia was, of course, unconscious of it.

Bustamente's next move came suddenly; he almost overwhelmed Belen with the unexpectedness of it.

It was late in the evening; she was in her little boudoir. Her maid was ill and she sat before the mirror of her dressing-table combing out the black tangles of her long, thick hair. She did not hear Bustamente as he entered.

A startled thrill vibrated on her shoulders as she saw his reflected face, behind her, looking over her upraised arm into the glass. For an instant a blind anger, rising into a flush of her dark cheeks, possessed her senses; the chances of life were unfair; he had secured the advantage.

But he did not avail himself of it with a swiftness equal to her feral turn, the sudden rise to her feet, the swiftly outthrust arms, throwing him back toward the door. She was behind her chair now, partly lifting it in her tense hands.

Bustamente had closed the door on entering. He panted a little, for her thrust had taken his breath. But he was smiling.

"You're a tiger!" he whispered.

She made no reply, but was watchful as that animal itself.

"Put down the chair, *amorcito*," he said. "I'm not going to leave very soon."

"I think you had better," she whispered.

He admired the discretion of her barely breathed voice. He took a tentative step toward her.

"What will you do if I don't?" he asked.

She was silent.

"Will you kill me, perhaps?" he queried, laughing a little.

"I may!"

Bustamente made an abrupt movement with his arm, thrusting his hand into his pocket. He drew out a small black revolver. With a mocking gesture he tossed it at her feet.

"There," he said. "It will be easier with that. I don't fancy being clubbed with a chair."

She seemed to take him literally, for she stooped at once, securing the weapon in her slender hand. It was pointed at him now, grasped in fingers that did not tremble.

The man watched her for a moment and then stepped forward slowly, pace by pace.

"Shoot me whenever you think I'm near enough," he said.

Belen found that the instant of definite decision was at hand, without the possibility of a moment's temporizing. She accepted her necessity; her eyes were wide and glowing, and on her cheeks a red excitement burned. He was close to her now; the revolver fell out of her fingers, her head dropped back; she was in his arms. He held her tightly, kissing her lips.

"You love me a little?" he whispered. "Of course, you must! I believe you'd have shot otherwise. Oh, thou lovely one!"

IV

LIFE, in Belen's case, having been unfavourable for the growth and establishment of the usual ameliorating illusions, it was natural for her to review her position with a coldness of eye that was somewhat startling.

As to Don Bustamente, she was undeceived. She understood him and comprehended, therefore, the insecurity of her position. Above everything, to her mind, there was the necessity of holding what she had gained; to go back to the Horno Negro was now an abominable prospect.

She perceived her position clearly. At the moment she was an intriguing interloper. Bustamente was so contemptuous of opinion that he took no discreet precautions. Heraclia would soon make a discovery, and exposure would probably destroy Belen's position.

In her practical way, then, she saw Heraclia as her chief opponent, and, realizing this, there was no sentimental shrinking in her nature to tie her hands from action.

For several weeks she thought of Heraclia in relation to her problem, bringing herself, by the plainest reasoning, to a decision.

The expedient she chose was neither very safe nor entirely pleasant. A less direct personality would have tried, inevitably, subtler means, at least at first. But Belen, in her cold simplicity, determined on a very conclusive attack.

On her part Heraclia, whose nature it was to distort and colour all her observations with the fictions of her sentimentalities, neither foresaw nor perceived during their progress the intriguing activities within her own home. The experiences of life had taught her, not suspicion, but humility. Heaven, she felt, often sought to try her; she reacted to each test with a humble heart.

It was in this spirit that she had always met the vagaries and the simple brutalities of her husband, who had never been a gentle man. Having suffered a broken heart three or four times during the early years of their marriage,

she had finally exhausted the emotion of self-pity. But pity, being essential to her nature, asserted itself toward the objects of Bustamente's amours; she saw the succession of women as his victims, and often wished that they could understand her, and confide in her.

But with each new affair she was always the last to sense it. Bustamente's wanderings were the common, threadbare properties of indiscriminate gossip long before her eyes were opened. That she would suspect Belen was impossible.

The girl, to her, was a sister, a sweet soul, a gracious one full of tender sacrifices. In her easy, effusive way she loved the girl. She never forgot the act of kindness that had sheltered her brother. When whispers reached her ears she repudiated them indignantly. It hurt her to find that her friends were so uncharitable, that they could stoop to the calumniation of this defenceless girl to whom she had given refuge. Toward Belen her affectionate demonstrations increased.

In order to refute by action the vague slanders that now began their season, Heraclia took active steps to be seen with the girl as often as possible—in the theatres, at the opera, at the horse races. She laid elaborate plans for their mutual amusement and companionship; only the failure of her health gradually diminished the execution of her purpose.

The obscure illness that now suddenly afflicted Heraclia was surprising in view of the fact that she had always enjoyed excellent well-being. For a time it interested her intensely; gave her a new zest to her life; took her thoughts away from Belen, centring them upon herself.

She enjoyed visiting many doctors, none of whom was able to help her. Some said she was anæmic; she swallowed large doses of iron and nux vomica, feeling an agreeable martyrdom as the bitter taste nauseated her. Others declared that her condition was purely nervous, prescribing quiet, rest, and more nux vomica; she luxuriated in bed until noon each day. Later, when vague stomachic pains appeared, it was concluded that she was suffering from an obscure infection, and so they gave her hypodermics of a vaccine made out of colon bacilli.

Her malady became more alarming and more mysterious. She scarcely thought of Belen, accepting her presence in the house as a commonplace phenomenon, becoming indifferent, in her absorption with her own troubles, to the scandalous innuendoes of her acquaintances.

Now she often experienced severe pain. She would awaken in the morning with sharp tinglings in her fingertips, burning pains in the abdomen, headaches, thirst. She had little appetite, lost weight, and became emaciated. They talked of an exploratory operation.

She went to Maracay for a change of air; in a few days she was improved. But it was lonesome there, and after Belen joined her the temporary relief of her symptoms vanished and it seemed better to go back to Caracas.

At last she sent to the University for Dr. Delgado Palacios, who had not yet been consulted. He came and listened to all her complaints with his customary surprised air; when he was the most decided he appeared the most confused.

Then, with many characteristic circumlocutions, he told her that she was being poisoned.

She only understood him with difficulty, but when his meaning was finally clear, her emotions were a complex of fright, astonishment, and incredulity. Above everything the notion was incredible.

Dr. Palacios, having taken a stand, refused to retract his opinion; he suggested that they both search the house.

In Belen's room they found a half-emptied paper package of white arsenic. It had come from the kitchen, where the servants, mixing it with bits of food, had used it to poison rats.

V

THE discovery astounded Heraclia, destroying the veil of her illusions. She understood. She saw the motive, its underlying causes. The warnings, the

words, the gossipings of her friends were all suddenly true. A hundred little happenings in the house, observed before as without significance, were swiftly full of meaning.

Having found the girl a saint, she now conceived her in a saint's antithesis; she was a witch, an incarnate evil, a fabulous monster.

Dr. Palacios left the house.

Heraclia, alone, waited for the ingrate hideous girl who had gone into the city. A fury raged within her like a tempest.

It was nearly time for dinner when Belen returned.

Bustamente's wife, closed in her room, heard the girl's step in the outer corridor; she opened the door softly and followed.

Belen entered the dining-room; Heraclia was close behind her.

For once the girl from the Horno Negro was taken without defence, without suspicion and unaware. Seeking a direct outlet for her passionate indignation, the older woman sprang upon her like a tiger, throwing her to the floor. Belen was breathless from the onslaught; she had no chance to defend herself. Screaming incoherently, the outraged wife tore at her hair, scratched her face, beat her with her hands that opened and closed spasmodically. Bustamente arrived at the peak of the tumult, in time, perhaps, to prevent a fatal outcome.

He seized his wife by the shoulder, spinning her around like a crazy top. She fell against the table, upset a chair, slipped down to the floor and then fainted. Bustamente picked up the prostrate girl and carried her out of the room.

He saw that he must remove her from the house at once. A few minutes later, Belen having recovered her breath, they left together.

Meanwhile, Heraclia was in a serious condition. She suffered a nervous collapse followed by a fever. For some days she was delirious; she revived only slowly, and several weeks passed before she was able to leave her bed. She learned then of the fate of Belen.

Bustamente had taken her to one of his other houses in the city, often employed in the past for similar purposes. There he had set up a new establishment. It all seemed old and familiar to Heraclia, who was not in the least shocked.

She was, indeed, beginning to suffer remorse. Reviewing what had happened, doubts assailed her. Sustained, revengeful emotions were impossible to her nature; distressing perplexities destroyed her peace.

It became more and more difficult for her to assure herself of a full justification; it was dreadful to think that she might have been mistaken. How could the girl who had taken her brother from the street be capable of these seeming infamies?

They had found a paper of poison in her room; was this not a meaningless accident? Before the discovery she had never believed in the slanderous suggestions that came to her ears; what basis had she now for credence?

Of course, a definite arrangement now existed between Bustamente and Belen, but Heraclia began to feel that this was solely the result of her own fatal impulsiveness, her sinful anger. Dreadful as it seemed, she herself had forced the poor child into a life of degradation!

Arriving at these conclusions, Bustamente's wife was tortured beyond measure. She prayed for relief; it did not come. At last she knew that she must confess to her *padre*. She went to the church as soon as she could go out of doors.

Entering the sanctuary of this holy place, she felt at once the relief it always brought to her. Before the glimmering altar burned the candles of the devout, who kneeled in prayer. Incense perfumed the vaulted space, sweet Oriental odours. The soothing and profound mystery of faith embraced her spirits.

Kneeling before the carved confessional, she spoke in low tones of deep contrition:

"*Yo pecador, me confieso. . . .*"

She told her sin, the crime of her

false jealousy, the tragedy of her weak anger. The penance was appointed; she waited; sweet forgiveness came in the padre's words.

"*Yo te absuelvo; en el nombre del Padre, del Hijo, y del Espiritu Santo!*"

Before leaving the church Heraclia fulfilled the first condition of her release: she emptied her purse into the box for the poor.

Outside it was a tropical, sunlit morning. Others passed her with troubled countenances, entering, as she had, the cathedral. A great peace seemed to have settled over the plaza. Heraclia, too, was at peace. She stood out in the sunlight, uncertain for a time. At last she was inspired; she saw her next duty.

With the divine forgiveness she felt the necessity of the human. She would go to Belen, show her that she was still the loving sister.

Poor child! Another of Bustamente's victims! Heraclia could not save her from that, but she could comfort her, she could bring her the sweet assurance of deserving love!

The chauffeur helped her into her car; she gave the familiar address. How many a one had fallen under the malignancy of the terrible Bustamente there! Misguided man. Perhaps prayer might still save him. . . .

HILLS

By Harrison Dowd

NIGHT unto night is added,
Morn unto morn.
Men on the earth for ever
Die and are born.

Love unto love is added,
Hate upon hate,
Leaving thy peace for ever
Inviolate.

FIRST God created man. Displeased with the result, He created woman. Then He gave it up as hopeless.

ALL men are fools. The man who knows it and admits it is called a philosopher.

THE WILD SQUIRE

By M. E. Saltykov

I

ONCE upon a time there lived in a certain district a country squire, and he used to look out upon the world and rejoice. He had a sufficiency of everything—peasants, and corn, and cattle, and land, and gardens. But this squire was foolish; he used to read reactionary papers; and his body was soft and white and puffy.

And once this squire prayed to the Lord, and said:

"O Lord, I rejoice in all Thy works and I am endowed with everything. There is only one thing which my heart cannot endure: the peasants have multiplied too much in our country."

But God knew that this squire was foolish and He did not grant his prayer.

The squire saw that the peasants did not die off but were still increasing every day; he saw this, and he was frightened and thought: "But suppose they eat up all my possessions?"

The squire turned to his favourite paper to see how he ought to act in such a case, and there he read, "Endeavour!"

"Only one word is written," said the silly squire, "but that word is golden."

And he began to endeavour, not just at random, but all according to rule. If a peasant's hen strayed into the squire's oats, off it went at once, according to rule—into the soup; if a peasant set to work secretly to cut wood in the squire's forests, this same wood went straightway into the squire's barn, together with a fine, according to rule, from the poacher.

"I am beginning to make a greater impression on them nowadays with these fines," said the squire to his neighbours, "because they understand it better."

The peasants saw that, although their squire was foolish, much cunning had been given to him. He closed them round in such a way that they had nowhere to poke their noses; whichever way they looked "You mustn't" and "You're forbidden to" and "It isn't yours!" The cattle go down to the water; the squire shouts, "It's my water!" A hen strays outside the fence; the squire calls out, "It's my land!" Land and water and air—all became his. There were no more torches for the peasants to light; there were no more twigs to sweep out their huts with. And so the whole village prayed to the Lord God.

"O Lord, it were easier for us to perish with our little children than to suffer thus all our lives."

The merciful Lord heard the tearful prayer of these orphans, and there ceased to be any peasants throughout the estates of the foolish squire. Nobody noticed where the peasants had gone to; people only saw how all of a sudden a whirlwind of chaff rose up and how the hempen trousers of the peasants were swept past in the air like a black cloud. The squire went out upon his balcony, and he sniffed and noticed how wonderfully fresh the air had become throughout his estates. Naturally he was delighted.

"Now," thought he, "I shall indulge my white body, my white, spongy, puffy body."

And he began to live and to live, and he began to think how to amuse his mind.

"I'll start a theatre here," he thought. "I'll write to the actor Sadovsky, 'Come along here, dear friend, and bring some actresses with you.'"

The actor Sadovsky complied; he came and he brought some actresses. Only he saw that the squire's house was empty and that there was no one to fit up the theatre and to pull up the curtain.

"What have you done with your peasants?" Sadovsky asked the squire.

"Ah, God has heard my prayer, and has cleared all my estates of peasants."

"But, my friend, you're a foolish squire! Who brings you water to wash your silly self with?"

"Oh, but I haven't washed for so many days."

"I suppose you want to grow mushrooms on your face?" said Sadovsky, and, saying this, he went away and carried off the actresses with him.

The squire remembered that there lived in the neighbourhood four generals with whom he was acquainted, and he thought, "Why should I keep on playing patience? Let me try to arrange a few hands of cards with the four generals."

No sooner said than done; he wrote invitations, fixed the day, and sent off the letters to the proper addresses. They were real generals, but hungry, so they arrived very quickly. They arrived and could not stop wondering why the air at the squire's had become so pure.

"It's because," boasted the squire, "God heard my prayer and cleared my estates of peasants."

The generals congratulated the squire: "Oh, how excellent! No doubt you don't have any of that smell of serf about now?"

"None at all," answered the squire.

They played a hand and played another; the generals felt that the time had come for them to drink vodka, and they began to be uneasy and to look around

"I dare say, generals, you would like something to eat?" the squire asked.

"That wouldn't be a bad idea, squire."

He rose from the table, went to the cupboard and took out for each person a candy, yes, and a printed gingerbread.

"What's this?" asked the generals, opening their eyes at him.

"There, eat what the Lord has sent you."

"We would like some beef, just a little beef."

"Well, generals, I've got no beef for you, because, ever since God preserved me from the peasants, the stoves in the kitchen haven't been heated."

The generals grew so angry with him that their very teeth chattered.

"But you eat something yourself?" they hurled at him.

"I live on raw food; and I've still got gingerbread—"

"Ah, friend, you're a foolish squire," said the generals, and, without even finishing the hand, they took their various ways home.

II

THE squire observed that he had been called a fool for the second time, and he wanted to think about it; but, as at that moment he happened to see the pack of cards, he waved his hand at the world and began to set out a hand of patience.

"We'll see, my Radical friends," he said, "who'll win. I'll show you what genuine strength of mind can do!"

He set out a "lady's caprice" and thought, "If it comes out three times in succession, it will signify that I oughtn't to take any notice of them." And, as it were in his own despite, no matter how often he set out the patience, it always, always came out! Not even a vestige of doubt remained in his mind.

"If Fortune herself shows the way," he said, "I must indeed stand firm to the end. But now I have played enough patience for a while; I'll go and be busy."

And so he walked and walked about the rooms, and then he sat down and sat down. And all the time he was thinking.

He was thinking what machines he would order from England so that everything would go by steam, yes, by steam, and that there should not be a single peasant soul anywhere. He thought what an orchard he would plant; the pears and plums would be over there, and the peaches there, and the walnuts there! He looked through the windows—why, there it all was already, just as he had imagined it! By force of magic, the pear-trees, peach-trees and apricot-trees were breaking under the weight of their fruit, and he had only to collect the fruit by machinery and put it into his mouth! He thought what cows he would breed, which wouldn't be meat or skin, but only milk, only milk! He thought what strawberries he would plant, the double and triple kinds only, five berries to the pound, and at what a high price he would sell these strawberries at Moscow.

At last he grew tired of thinking and went to the mirror to look at himself—but there was dust an inch thick on it.

"Simeon!" he called for his man-servant suddenly, forgetting himself. But then he remembered and said, "Well, let it stay there for the present; I'll show those Radicals what firmness of mind can do!"

He carried on like this as long as it was light, and then he went to sleep.

And he dreamed still more merrily than when he was awake. He dreamed that the Governor of the province himself had learned of his squirely inflexibility and had asked the Chief of Police, "Who is this firm-minded son of a chicken who has come to light in your district?" And then he dreamed that he was made a Minister for this inflexibility of his, and that he was walking about in decorations and writing instructions: "Be firm and heed nothing!" Then he dreamt that he was walking on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates—

"Eve, my friend," he said.

And then all his dreams came to an end, and it was time to get up.

"Simeon!" he shouted, again forgetting himself; but suddenly he remembered and hung his head.

"What shall I do with myself?" he asked himself. "If even the Evil One would only bring me a satyr!"

And while he was saying this suddenly the Chief of Police drove up. The foolish squire rejoiced beyond telling to see him; he ran to the cupboard and took out two gingerbreads and thought, "There, *he'll* like these!"

"Tell me, please, squire, in what wonderful manner have all your people suddenly disappeared?" asked the Chief of Police.

"Ah, now you're asking. The Lord heard my prayer and entirely cleared all my estates of peasants."

"I see; but do you know, squire, who will pay their taxes?"

"Taxes? Why, that's their business. It's their most sacred duty and obligation!"

"I see; but how is the tax to be collected from them if because of your prayer they have been scattered about the face of the earth?"

"Well, that's—I don't know— For my part, I don't consent to pay!"

"But do you know, squire, that the Treasury can't exist without taxes, and, still more, without spirit and salt duties?"

"Yes, I—I'm ready! I'll pay—a glass of vodka."

"Are you aware that, thanks to you, it's impossible to buy either a piece of meat or a loaf of bread in our market? Are you aware what this points to?"

"I'm very sorry. For my part, I'm ready to make a sacrifice. Here are two whole gingerbreads!"

"You're a fool, squire," said the Chief of Police, and turned round and drove away without even looking at the gingerbreads.

III

THIS time the squire thought about it seriously. This was already the third man who had called him a fool, the

third man who had stared and stared at him, spat on the ground and gone away. Could he really be a fool? Could this inflexibility which he so prized in his own mind really mean, translated into ordinary language, only silliness and folly? And was it really the case that, as a result of his inflexibility, both taxes and duties were left unpaid and there was no possibility of purchasing a pound of flour or a piece of meat in the market?

And as he was a foolish squire, he actually burst out laughing on the spot with delight at the thought of the joke he was playing; but then he remembered the words of the Chief of Police —"Are you aware what this points to?"—and he grew frightened beyond a joke.

He began, in his usual manner, to walk up and down the rooms, and all the time he was thinking: "Well, what does it point to? Doesn't it point to a convict settlement? Cheboxari, for example, or Varnavini perhaps?

"Well, suppose it is Varnavini, at least the world will realize what firmness of mind means," said the squire. But secretly he was already thinking, "Perhaps at Varnavini I should see my dear peasants again."

The squire walked about, and he sat down, and he walked about again. No matter where he went, everything seemed to be saying: "You're a foolish squire!" He saw a little mouse run across the room and steal up to the cards with which he had been playing patience and which he had already sufficiently soiled to arouse a mouse's appetite.

"Kshsh!" He jumped at the mouse.

But the mouse was clever and understood that the squire without Simeon could not do it any harm. It only wagged its tail in answer to the squire's threatening exclamation, and a moment later it was looking up at him from under the couch, as if to say:

"Just you wait, you foolish squire, and see what's coming. I shall eat not only your cards but your dressing-gown, too, as soon as you make it sufficiently greasy!"

Sooner or later, later or sooner, the squire had to see how the paths in his garden were overgrown with docks, the bushes were swarming with all sorts of snakes and vipers, and in the park wild animals howled. Once a bear came into the very garden, sat on its hind legs, looked in at the squire through the windows and licked its chops.

"Simeon!" screamed the squire, but suddenly remembered and—wept.

However, his firmness of mind still did not desert him. Several times he began to weaken, but as soon as he felt that his heart was beginning to soften he at once dashed to his favourite newspapers and in a minute he became hardened again.

"No; better I should grow quite wild, better let me roam about the forests with wild beasts, than that any man should say that the Russian nobleman, Count Urus-Kutchum-Kildibaev, had abandoned his principles!"

And he did grow wild. Although by this time the autumn had already arrived and the frosts were becoming considerable, he did not feel the cold. He was all overgrown from top to toe with hair like Esau of old; and his nails had become like iron. He went about more and more on all fours, and was even astonished that he had previously failed to notice that this way of walking was the best and the most convenient. He even lost the power of uttering distinct sounds and took for himself a particular sort of triumphant cry—something between a whistle, a hiss, and a bellow. But he had not yet grown a tail.

He went out in his park in which he had formerly indulged his spongy, white, puffy body, and like a cat he sprang at one bound to the very top of a tree and kept a lookout there. A hare came running along, stood on its hind legs and began to listen if there was any danger near—and there was the squire up in the tree. Like an arrow he sprang down, fastened upon his prey, tore it with his nails and ate it up

with all its inside and even with the skin.

And he became awfully strong, so strong indeed that he even thought himself entitled to enter into friendly relations with the very bear which had once looked at him through the window.

"Michael, son of Ivan," he said to the bear, "shall we go hare-hunting together?"

"I'm willing," answered the bear. "But, friend, it was a pity you got rid of those peasants."

"Why?"

"Why, because it was ever so much easier to eat a peasant than one of your brother-noblemen. And so I tell you straight: you're a foolish squire, although you're my friend!"

IV

MEANWHILE the Chief of Police, although he protected the squires, could not be silent before such a fact as the disappearance of the peasants from the face of the earth. And the provincial authorities began to trouble him with demands for information, and wrote to him: "Who, in your opinion, will now pay the taxes? Who will drink spirits in the taverns? Who will occupy himself with innocent occupations?"

The Chief of Police replied, "The Treasury must be suspended and the innocent occupations have already suspended themselves; instead of them the district is full of robbery, brigandage, and murder. Why, only that same day he himself had met a bear that was not a bear, a man that was not a man, and it had tried to attack him, the Chief of Police; and in this man-bear he suspected the same foolish squire who was the original cause of the whole trouble.

The authorities grew nervous and called a council. They decided to catch peasants and settle them on the land, and to impress in the most delicate manner upon the squire, who was the original cause of the whole trouble, that he must stop his boasting and not put obstacles in the way of the payment of taxes into the Treasury.

Just as if it had been done on purpose, there flew through the city at this moment a stray swarm of peasants which settled all over the market-place. At once this godsend was collected, put into a basket, and sent into the countryside.

And suddenly there was once more a smell of chaff and sheepskins in that countryside; and simultaneously there appeared in the bazaar flour and meat and all kinds of poultry, and so many taxes were paid in in one day that the Treasury clerk, seeing such a quantity of money, could only wave his hands with amazement and cry:

"Where do you get it all from, you rascals?"

But what happened to the squire? my readers will ask. To this I may reply that he was caught, though with considerable difficulty. When they caught him, they at once washed him and cut his nails. Then the Chief of Police took away his reactionary papers, and, handing him over to Simeon's care, drove away.

He is living to this day. He sets out hands of patience, yearns for his old life in the forests, washes only when he is made to, and roars occasionally.

THE POOL

By John Russell McCarthy

HOW can a man grow old
While the swimming pool
Lures like a watery heaven
Under the trees?

The years go counting themselves—
Inevitably—
Like an adding-machine—
One and one and one. . . .

But how can a man grow old
While the diving board
Beckons—beckons—
To the thrill and cool joy
Under the trees?

The cares go counting themselves—
Inevitably—
Like an adding-machine—
Ten and ten and ten. . . .

But what are cares in the splash of a dive?
And what are years in the clear water?
How can a man grow old
While the swimming pool
Lures like a watery heaven
Under the trees?

LONG engagements are much better than short ones. As long as they last there is still chance for escape.

IS she pretty? Other questions are superfluous.

OUT OF MODOC

By Milnes Levick

I

SHE lay motionless, face down, on the ragged sofa. The dust of Modoc's roads was upon her, and with a thin and febrile clairvoyance she followed unwillingly each step in the preparations for the performance. They were always the same. Here among the mountains of this farthermost corner of California, with the railroad far behind them, Malvern would go to the bar of the hotel, then he would take the carryall to the livery stable and presently there would be a clatter on the porch and his discussion, noisy that the inhabitants might hear, of the best position in which to place the frame.

Her own picture was in the frame, with the others. Behind the shut lids of her eyes Lucille could see her picture very clearly. It had seemed splendid when she had had it taken surreptitiously before she left home. Then it had had a magic quality that made it glow, as if it were an earnest of her career and of the fame she was to win upon the stage; it had borne the mark of an indubitable professionalism and there was no other picture like it. But now it was soiled and had begun to fade and there were scratches upon its former smoothness, and the face that she saw in it was the face of a child.

Hers was at the bottom of the frame, in the place of least significance. At each side, a little higher, were those of two men and at the top were two more women. They circled like satellites around the one in the centre, a large photograph, that of Maurice Malvern.

But as she lay on the sofa Lucille could not bring to herself the vision of this picture: the romanticism of its pose and the extravagant and appealing defiance of its expression dissolved, and she could see only the face of the man as he himself was.

The voice of Mrs. Malvern came from the verandah. Its huskiness intruded colourlessly into the somnolence of the girl's room, of the hotel, of the whole hamlet. The frame, Malvern, all else receded. . . .

"Yes, a grand season. Why, we went into Walla Walla for a week and played twelve, and we done capacity business every night."

She always greeted them so, these rustics along the obscure route she had travelled season after season; she would talk with them of the stage and of the crops, on hotel porches or in the dimly lighted dining-rooms, treating them as old friends and recalling their names like a politician. She laughed now, wheezing, and the raucous plaintiveness evoked a figure for Lucille: one squat and flaccid and grimed, dowdy and shapeless beneath a scarf and the amplitude of a soiled overall.

Lucille considered her and the length of her travels with Malvern: their journeyings in this hinterland, the poverty of their makeshifts and the amazements of fortune—even of a run of three months, in Walla Walla. She had seemed so wonderful when first they met; she had patted Lucille on the shoulder and laughed while she said:

"There, there, dearie, you're of age. It ain't so long ago since I ran away from home myself to go on the stage. And I never was sorry."

Lucille shrank at the memory of the contact; it had smirched that first day

in Sacramento and the days before and since. Back there, as she left her home, her whole life had seemed all at once an ordered progression, shaped by a superior kindness that was leading her past timid hopes and headstrong impotencies to the reality of the time to come. And now that the future was upon her the voice of Mrs. Malvern echoed in it hollowly.

There was the night she had turned suddenly on Lucille and her giddy petulance had become noxious in the dressing-room where the three women were making up: Lucille had cowered; and could still feel the flush of her cheeks, as if there were mysterious and unowned cause for shame.

There was the day when the woman had stood before her, arms akimbo, pausing suddenly in the skimped rehearsal to say, "You're a born actress, my girl—you're a deep one."

There was, too, this day not yet done, and the long jump in the carryall; the thin cold of the shadows and the acrid heat of the sun, the bleak expanses that enfeebled her with resentment of their emptiness and meaninglessness, the interminable hills piled upon the plateau and the vista of the desert beyond, in Nevada . . . and Malvern.

He had given the reins to one of the other men, and while the native fuzzy-tail horses strained and joggled on the ever changing grade he had come to sit beside her in her solitude by the baggage at the rear of the creaking wagon. His silence had pressed upon her like a sardonic menace and there was awareness in the thick back of his wife before them. Lucille looked at him once and found his eyes upon her.

To-morrow would be the same. At half-past five she would wake in a terror as the hotel proprietor, after the custom of the region, beat upon a triangle on the verandah: the metallic clamour would grow and shimmer like a vibrant coil through the sleeping air above the little valley; in the opening day she would be pinched by the cold of this altitude and she would arise numbed; then the carryall would set off again into the illimitable.

As she lay now, in her travelling dress, she waited in dread, though it was evening, as if the thrill of the triangle were imminent. She was bruised with fatigue, and the memory of her home was about her like a pungency, so that she could have reached forth her hand, with eyes unseeing, and touched the old familiar things.

II

. . . She dozed, and woke with the quickening of prescience.

Malvern was in the room. He stood motionless with his back to the door.

She listened to her heart beats smite like an alarm upon the dusk. But she was not afraid. She did not tell him to go away. She did not speak at all, but lay watching him, with a curious basic equanimity, contemplating him like some distant manifestation that could not touch her life.

In their silence each felt the other measuring forces. It was as if their wariness were a plummet in the stillness of an unknown sea.

Suddenly he advanced; he seemed not to stride but to emerge through the crepuscular planes. He came without footfall, and touched emptiness.

"What do you want?"

Her voice was from beside him; he turned, in surprise. She stood very straight, but he stooped to peer at the luminousness of her face, and in this proximity she felt as she had not before the crassness of him and the foulness of his confidence.

"Don't run away," he said.

"I shan't." She laughed a little.

Through the admonishing lowness of his tone she sensed the clumsiness that had no reliance but in brutality.

"Lucille." The word trembled.

She stepped from him, and in the darkness for a moment he was at a loss. He sought to put supplication into his tone, but it came raspingly.

"I need you more than I can say."

"That's a line from a play."

". . . What of it?"

"Don't try to fool yourself."

"And you shan't fool me. . . . Lucille—" He waited, as if she were considering.

"Do you want me to call your wife?"

"What she wouldn't do to you? Lucille, listen to me."

The quietude quivered about them.

"Don't you like me a little bit?"

His tone changed.

"Come here," he commanded. "Let me talk to you."

She laughed.

"Lucille," he repeated.

The faint light from the window flitted across her figure for a moment as she stole into a corner.

"I've got you pocketed!" He spoke without triumph, as one might talk to a child.

She moved once more; but he turned and she saw he had spoken truth.

"Lucille. . . . Be a good little girl. . . . Think what she'd do to you if you told. Isn't it foolish of you? . . . You little devil, aren't you ever going to speak?"

He listened.

"I tell you you'd better," he said.

She shrank against the wall, and the sharpness of her nails made prints of fire upon her palms.

"She won't speak, eh?. . . Well, then . . ."

The silence in the room became like anguish in music. Then it was rent by the rattle of the door. The man turned and was very still; no sound came from the girl's corner.

On the threshold stood Mrs. Malvern.

The woman's eyes groped for them, and when at last she saw them she closed the door behind her very gently.

"So," she said: her tone was unctuous in its stringency.

Malvern's voice was projected tentatively toward her. Beneath his casualness was the torpor of sudden sobering.

"I was speaking to Lucille about that bit of business in the second act," he said.

His words hung heavy in mid-air, as if arrested by the woman's ominous immobility. When she did not answer he moved, and the shifting of his feet made a scuffle on the threadbare carpet. "The business with the letter I was talking to you about the other day. Lucille will learn in time; she's got talent."

"That's enough."

Her curtness broke the bond of attention; they remained each isolated, waiting for what might come forth from the darkness.

"I've been waiting for this," said the woman grimly at last.

"You don't believe me?" He failed to achieve surprise. "You don't? Well, you're 'way off. Ask Lucille."

The wheeze of Mrs. Malvern's breathing came slowly for a space before she spoke.

"Do you suppose I'd believe her?"

"You can believe what you want to." There was a shrug in the words.

But he could not overcome the silence of the woman, a silence like an emanation, and he turned to speech as to escape. "Oh, you're crazy. Ask her. She'll tell you . . . won't you, Lucille?"

"*No.*"

The girl's rejection came winged like an arrow. Malvern laughed, as a man may laugh irresolutely when he is hit. At length he said:

"Oh, very well."

"You—" said the wife, and desisted.

Hatred played across him; it seemed palpable, welling through the dark, sweeping onward to find its lodgment in the unmoving figure against the opposite wall.

Malvern stirred.

"Oh, we don't care," he said; "Lucille and I—do we, Lucille?"

"Malvern," the woman whispered in sudden pain, "I'll make your life a hell on earth as you've made mine."

For an instant they were absorbed in one another and in the involutions of unbelief and faithlessness in the compulsion of their lives.

"She's one too many," the woman said.

III

THE silence settled down again like crows that have been flurried, and Lu-

cille felt the scrutiny of their minds upon her, as if they were obtusely, even unknowingly, waiting for her to give them the answer to their riddle. They waited, thinking each of the other, but in reality expectant of her. And she made no sound; she breathed with caution, that her presence might be a mystery to them, and within her something moved alertly, as does the eye at an unexpected flick of light.

She became aware of a new thing, a spirit that had been elusive before her in her tawdry parts: the sense of power stirred her quickly, power to influence and shape, to create out of the emotions of others. Her impulse was to answer them, to make the silence clang with brazen flouting of them both, but she was restrained by this new knowledge and she watched it unfolding with hushed excitement.

"They can't touch you," it said to her; "they can't approach you: from now on you are unattainable to them and all their kind."

"You—what are you?" the woman said to her at last.

To herself the girl said, "I am what you can never be, with all your years," but she held back the words: exultance was tremulous in her breast, and she tried to still it, like a too-valiant friend, lest it betray her, revealing the laughter that would turn them upon her in unison. Never could they understand her.

She marvelled at the fourth presence in the room, as it revealed to her all that she was and might be. They seemed distant and small like children puzzled before some simple mystery of death or life.

"She's not worth your getting mad about," said the man.

Lucille laughed softly; then from a new inaccessibility she heard herself speaking.

"How he must boast in bar-rooms."

He turned, snarling, and was baffled by her aloofness. His tone was echoed by his wife, "I'll show you." She flung forward and there was a sharp cry of threat, stifled as Malvern caught her. Their mutter mingled, spasmodic with physical conflict.

"Do you want to queer the show?" he demanded.

"Let go." The woman's words failed and became a whimper at some invisible coercion.

"Let her come," said the girl.

She wished oddly that he would release his wife, though she knew he would not. A woman's oath broke through the darkness. The girl wondered with trustful serenity what fresh power she would evince to cope with the wife's rage, how she would move her like an audience. She felt the sap of life quick in her veins, a mad vigour lifting her incomparably above these two whom she had emptied and squeezed dry, and she saw before her the long inexorable road in which her steps were now set, a road whose end was beyond discerning, yet which could not daunt her. For without rancour she had learned how to be hard and how to be relentless.

A long sigh came from the woman, querulous and reluctant like that of a tired child resigned to sleep. The girl smiled.

. . . She saw again his face beside her in the carryall, the crude virility of it leering. She saw herself turn away, frightened and weary, the memory of her home desirable before her. She beheld again the day's journeying: the dead salt lake of a sink, the outskirts of the desert, touched with the imprint of bygone cycles, in its gauntness conserving jealously the life within it. She saw before her the kindred hills, unrolling slowly, splashed with great sinister patches of lichen, vermilion and sulphur and emerald; and once, stark upon the side of a peak, the straight uncompromising line of barrenness worn years before from base to summit by a caravan of seekers for a promised land.

Beneath the mottle of lichen was rock, vast as the foundation of a world, and where the hills reached down to the tenderness of violet shadows, she knew the softness of that tone was no more than the illusion of black sage

dried and stripped to stalks but persisting through heat and cold and storm. It was so that she must be: as rock and the toughness of sage, that life might not sweep her yieldingly before it. Within her a voice called gladly, "Strength, strength!" and the future was no longer an emptiness but a victory.

. . . She listened to the breathing of him as he held the woman in subjection, and the hoarse catch of the wife's breath, and then its relaxation as she sobbed once, not loudly.

. . . "It's time half-hour was called," the girl said, and the spectacle of their impotence filled her with austere rejoicing.

IN HIS STEPS

By T. F. Mitchell

WITH the confidence born of a two weeks' attendance at the dancing school, I ventured to the ball. When the strains of music arose, I seized the young lady assigned to me and started off on a giddy fox trot. To my surprise I found that she did not keep step very well.

"What sort of a maiden have they thrust upon me?" I speculated.

"You find the fox trot fatiguing?" I bade of her when the music finished.

"Fox trot?" she asked in surprise. "Why, that was a waltz."

MY HEART

By Gamaliel Bradford

MY tongue, with all its wayward skill,
Its too fantastic glee,
My tongue for others, if they will;
But all my heart for thee.

My pen, which idle thoughts abuse,
Good thoughts too often flee,
My pen for others, if they choose;
But all my heart for thee.

My brain, which hunts in devious ways
More shadows than may be,
My brain for others, if they praise;
But all my heart for thee.

CATASTROPHE

By Lew Tennant

I

THE man sat staring at an evening newspaper. Dinner lay untouched before him on the massive table respondent in silver and napery. The headlines in the paper screamed the story of the man's failure. Yesterday he had been a millionaire; to-day he was a bankrupt. Yesterday he had been spoken of as a Presidential possibility; to-day he was called a broken gambler. With the loss of his fortune had come the loss of his political aspirations and his good name. But the man was a good loser. He lit a Corona-Corona and smiled. A servant entered and laid a telegram beside his plate.

II

Two hours later they found his lifeless body sprawled across his bed, a revolver still clutched in his yet warm fingers. On the floor was a crumpled yellow ball—the telegram. It was from his recently divorced wife. It read: "Have learned of your disaster. Cannot desert you now. Return to you at once."

MORNING SONG

By Sara Teasdale

A DIAMOND of a morning
Waked me an hour too soon,
Dawn had taken in the stars
And left the clear white moon.

Oh, white moon, you are lonely,
It is the same with me,
But we have the world to roam over—
Only the lonely are free.

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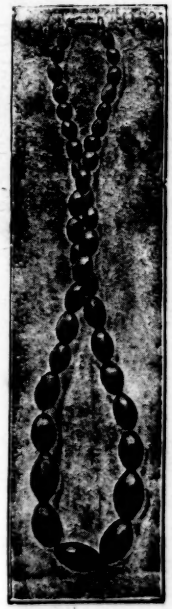

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ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS

By Mary Pitcairn

June, the month of roses, is as inspiring to the dress-designer as it is to the garden-lover, and no dismal prophecies of a wet summer will damp the ardour of either when dreaming of the sunny days on which depend in a measure the fulfilment of their ideals. As a matter of fact, however, the dress artist scores considerably over the flower devotee, because he can at least bring his hopes to bloom, as it were, whether skies be blue or overcast, and even though they may have to flourish unseen should the latter conditions predominate.

This year, at any rate, he is prepared for joyous times indoors or out, and the Really-Truly Summer Girl will be as irresistible a creature as fascinating frocks can make her. For there is nothing more alluring than captivatingly flaunting frills or artfully contrived draperies, and both have received this season the smiling benison of Dame Fashion, so that short and tall, stout and slim, may rejoice alike in the opportunities of the hour. So we have frills that mount above each other from hem to waist; others that wander down the skirt like little pie frills put on sideways; and plissé flounce after plissé flounce in the tiered formation that achieves the inevitable apron front, while the back and sides of the gown are flowing lines of grace evolved from the folds that finish the long-waisted bodice.

It is too early yet to prophesy whether the economical overall-inclined group will really succeed in influencing summer fashions, but with such manifold delights around us their task is likely to prove a hard one. At the same time there is a certain amount of practical common sense in the predilection for materials with an all-over patterning, and the foulards have once more come triumphantly to the fore where the silken varieties are concerned. I like the quaint little net vests, which are almost fichus, that are to be seen as relieving-medium on many of the models; whilst others, of course, favour an alliance with fine gabardine or charmeuse, and are completed by the demurest and shortest of coats, which look at first sight so integral a part of the scheme that it is quite a surprise when they are removed. Such coatees are often sleeveless, and cire satin is another fabric much used in this connection.

Personally, I cannot really take this shiny material to my heart except perhaps as a trimming *pur et simple*, and the only time I have ever realized it had any possibility of charm in its waxen lengths was when I saw it utilized for the really lovely evening frock worn by Grace Lane in "The Grain of Mustard Seed." Her diamante lattice-work corsage was completed by a skirt of black cire satin, with flouncing paniers that flattened as they neared the front and, crossing each other low down, met again at the back as twin pointed trains. This last feature, by the way, is evidenced in nearly all the new gowns, though the train itself has become so versatile of late that there is no longer any hard and fast rule as to whence it may spring nor even what it may be made of. Trains that develop from either hip, finding embodiment in tulle or wide ribbon, and which carry on an independent existence, are numerous, and may be absolutely alien to each other in the matter of material or even colour. As often as not they are allied to the shortest of skirts, which in some cases are so abbreviated that they appear to have difficulties with regard to even covering the knees when any other than a standing position is in question.

Under such circumstances shoes are of the utmost importance in a land not particularly noted for pretty feet, and having shown itself, alas! equally deficient in the matter of thin trim ankles! For quite the newest ideas in footwear I must refer again to the play already mentioned, in which Miss Lane and Cathleen Nesbit both wore noticeably attractive shoes. The toe vamp was cut very short, and had a narrow centring strap running from it to meet

LILAC COTTAGE,
ASHINGFIELD.

MY DEAR JOAN,

I shall be delighted to see you as soon as you can come, and so, I'm sure, will the babies. Michael is quite a man and looks much more than four; and your namesake, Joan, is quite nice, though still rather inarticulate. Jack hasn't seen her yet; she was born after he went to Mesopotamia, but he is coming home soon, and I hope he'll approve of his daughter. Both the kiddies have such glorious hair, really golden, and a mass of curls. I want them both to have a good start in every way, so I have used nothing but *stallax* as a shampoo for them ever since they were born. I discovered it myself quite a long time ago, and now I always keep a supply in the house for the three of us. Of course, their skins are still in that exquisite peach-like state which turns us grown-ups green with envy, and they need nothing to preserve it except washing with soap and water. One has to be so careful about a nursery soap, doesn't one? Nurse recommended me *pilenta* as the most neutral and non-irritating one; I used it once by chance—and I've used it ever since. But mere soap and water don't seem to suffice to keep the grown-up skin in condition. I asked the doctor once, for fun, why the babies had such lovely complexions while my own was always rough and red. He said it was because nature was always invisibly peeling off their old outer skin and exposing a fresh layer, whereas, as one grew older, one lost the power of shedding one's skin so quickly, and the outer layer grew coarse and rough. But he also told me that a perfectly harmless substance known as *mercolized wax* had the effect of stimulating the natural process; and, by using it regularly, one could keep a fresh, soft skin until one was eighty or thereabouts. I thought there could be no harm in trying it, so I ordered some mercolized wax from my chemist. I have been using it for a month now, and I don't think you would recognize my new complexion as the rather indifferent one you knew.

So you are thinking of "bobbing" your hair? I don't think I should if I were you; the fashion has been so ridden to death. If, as you say, your hair is getting thin and you think cutting it would make it stronger, why not try a good hair lotion? I don't think you could beat one made of *boranium* and bay rum, which you can easily make up at home. I have found it splendid myself, and I even insist on the babies using it once a fortnight. . . . I do think beautiful hair is *such* an asset to anyone. I've been rather worried about my own lately, because though otherwise healthy, worry and things have made it grey in streaks. However, I soon cured that by using a prescription someone recommended me—it was bay rum and *tammalite*, which restored my hair perfectly to its old colour.

But as to yours: to be perfectly frank, I think the thinness is due to the fact that you are perpetually worrying your hair with curling tongs. Yes, I know you don't look your prettiest unless your hair is waved, but won't it be horrid in twenty years time when you are almost completely bald? I'm not such a cat as I sound, though, because I've discovered a marvellous way of waving one's hair without tongs. So that if you are in the middle of the Sahara, or at the South Pole, or at any other inconvenient place where tong-heating appliances are not available, if you only have a bottle of *silmerine* you can laugh at fate. There! It's out! Well, all you've got to do with silmerine is to damp the part of the hair that wants waving, overnight, and await results. For the little short bits at the side, it is as well to damp them with silmerine, and do them up in a curler. This won't be necessary more than once in ten days, I should think, for the effects of silmerine last for some time. For the main part of your hair, comb it as you do when you dress it, slightly damp the part where you want a wave, and put in slides. Then fluff the hair up between the slides, so as to make the ridge deeper. In the morning when you take out the slides you will find nice kinks where they have been. You will find that if you get the silmerine habit, when the first obstinacy of the hair has been overcome, it will not be necessary to use silmerine except at rare intervals. Your hair will develop a tendency to wave naturally. You will need a little patience though, and you must really *coax* your hair into the way it should go.

I do hope you will bring that charming Miss Sydenham with you—she has such beautiful eyes, or rather such wonderful long curling lashes that she fascinates one. I do hope the babies will have nice eyelashes. I rub a little *mennaline* on them every night, as that improves them wonderfully and is quite harmless.

Of course, I haven't any maids, and nurse and I are doing everything.

Yours ever,

MAVIS.

that encircling the ankle, and jewelled, jetted, or of aluminium threaded brocade, they were absolutely enchanting.

As far as summer colours are concerned the leading favourites are a clean bright yellow, all rose tints, and an extra violet shade of the long popular rust hue. I must confess to a hope that the last-mentioned will soon die the death of over-popularity, for it is a particularly trying colour to wear, clashes horribly with almost every other tint with which it comes in contact, and is an eye-aching tone, at the best, for sunny days. The general craze for bright hues, however, is still on the increase, as witness the amazingly vivid parasols, the strange conglomerations of impossible flowers and fruits that "adorn" (?) many of the new wide-brimmed hats, and the demand for gay "fluffies" of all descriptions. Indeed, the wonderfully dyed ostrich-feather boa or marabout wrap has almost ousted from their place the paler golden foxes and fawny-toned jackal skins which one leading couturière used to term "sunshine furs."

Talking of wraps, the cloak has by no means lost its hold on daytime fashions, whilst for evening wear it is more charming than ever. Its importance as a decorative stage asset, too, is recognized in a number of recent successes, thereby giving priceless hints to every woman in the audience. Yvonne Arnaud, in the re-dressed "Kissing Time," had a model that might well be copied for day or evening wear; in "The Showroom" there was an enviable affair, with quaintly turned back corners, which was composed of alternating bands of brocade and cloth of tissue in shot blues and greens; and in "Just Fancy," among a galaxy of fascinating models a special word of praise is due to Margaret Bannerman's cloak of shaded mauve frills, tied with silk ribbons. There is a tendency in the leading Paris houses to make the evening dress and enveloping cloak definitely coincide, an idea which "gives one to think," in these days when economy is preached at least, since it necessitates almost as many wraps as gowns, and neither are obtainable for trifling prices nor show any real signs of diminishing in that direction for some time to come.

In these days a woman dare not be unsightly. There's no excuse for it. She may be plain—many plain women are particularly attractive—but she must be fresh and wholesome looking. It is an offence against our fellow-beings to be one whit less pleasant looking than it is possible to become. No woman should go about presenting superfluous hairs, double chins, and other unpleasantnesses to the public gaze. It's so unnecessary. There are beauty doctors galore: women and men who have made a thorough study of the skin and its functions, the only difficulty being to choose the most conscientious of these. Mrs. Adair has proved herself this in three cities—London, Paris, and New York—so those in doubt may safely go to 92, New Bond Street and have wonders worked with the Ganesh Eastern remedies. To motorists and sportswomen particularly these spell skin salvation. A weather-beaten face is rather odd-looking above an evening gown and a lily white neck. Space forbids these specialities and their accomplishments being mentioned in detail, but Mrs. Adair is always willing to give full information to inquirers.

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A very useful reference book has recently been published by Messrs. Baillière, Tindall and Cox. The author is T. C. Kingzett, F.I.C., F.C.S. It is a popular Chemical Dictionary, very concisely compiled, and in such a simple and clear manner as to be perfectly understandable by anyone, and not only by those who have made a study of chemistry. It is nicely bound and illustrated, and its price is 15s. No reference library will be complete without including the popular Chemical Dictionary on its shelves.

"THE WHOLE ART OF DINING"

There is also another book which deserves special mention, and without which hostesses must feel at a loss, for there are always anxious and doubtful moments when entertaining; but with "The Whole Art of Dining," by J. Rey, for reference there is no necessity for the slightest meditation.

Published by Carmona and Baker at 21s. net, this useful book contains many illustrations, a number of which are beautifully coloured; and I venture to assert that, whether entertaining on a large scale or small, no hostess should be without "The Whole Art of Dining," which deals clearly and intelligently with any contingency that may arise either before a dinner or while one is in progress.

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